3 ATONEMENT ARC

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY

STORY BY
RYUKISHI07

ART BY
KARIN SUZURAGI

Higurashi
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Yes... That is the truth of Oyashiro-sama's Curse.

YOU'RE SAYING THOSE THINGS ARE IN OUR BRAINS ...!?

A PARA-SITE !?

AND...

THAT'S WHY THE OYASHIRO-SAMA FANATICS ARE TRYING TO STEAL THE SCRAPBOOK.

IF THIS FACT GOT OUT, IT WOULD CRUSH ALL FAITH IN OYASHIRO-SAMA.

...NOW THAT WE KNOW THE TRUTH ...

...THEY WANT TO TAKE OUR LIVES TOO...!

KEEP OUT
CHAPTER 8: TURNAROUND

THERE ARE PARASITES IN OUR BRAINS...?

THAT'S COMPLETELY OUTRA-GEOUS...

Hon-estly, no...

...Well...

!

...You don't believe it, do you?

BUT THE PARASITE THEORY EXPLAINS EVERY-THING...

IT FITS PERFECTLY WITH THE LEGEND OF OYASHIRO-SAMA THAT'S BEEN HANDED DOWN IN HINAMIZAWA.

IT WAS PARA-SITES.

IT WASN'T DEMONS THAT CAME OUT OF THE SWAMP.

...DEMONS POURED OUT OF ONIGAFUCHI SWAMP AND ATTACKED THE VILLAGERS?

YOU KNOW THE PART WHERE IT SAYS THAT A LONG, LONG TIME AGO ...

THEY WERE SO TERRIFYING IN THEIR RAGE, THEY CAME TO BE CALLED "DEMONS."

BECAUSE OF THE PARASITES, SOME PEOPLE WENT BERSERK AND ATTACKED OTHER VILLAGERS.

...AND CALMED THE DEMONS.

OYASHIRO-SAMA DESCENDED UPON THE VILLAGE ...

...WAS A DOCTOR OR SOMEONE SIMILAR WHO CAME TO THE VILLAGE.

MOST LIKELY THIS "OYASHIRO-SAMA"...

Next.

...I GUESS YOU COULD INTERPRET IT THAT WAY...

...AND PUT A STOP TO THE VIOLENCE AND DERANGEMENT THEY BROUGHT ON.

THAT DOCTOR RELIEVED THE EPIDEMIC CAUSED BY THE PARASITES ...

...the curse that strikes villagers who leave.

And it also explains "Oyashiro-sama's Curse"...

.....

...THE PARASITES TRIED TO STOP THEM.

SO WHEN THEIR HOSTS, THE HUMANS INFECTED WITH THE PARASITES, TRIED TO LEAVE HINAMIZAWA ...

...THE PARASITES CAN ONLY LIVE IN HINA-MIZAWA.

BECAUSE OF THE CLIMATE AND WEATHER CONDITIONS HERE...

...MOTIVAT-ING THEM TO RETURN TO THE VILLAGE...

THEY WOULD STIMULATE THEIR HOSTS TO DERANGEMENT AND VIOLENCE MORE FORCIBLY...

THAT'S WHAT TAKANO-SAN SAID.

...

THAT MIGHT BE BECAUSE THE PARASITES' ABILITIES HAVE WEAKENED AFTER SO MANY YEARS.

BUT NOTHING HAPPENS TO US WHEN WE LEAVE THE VILLAGE.

BUT WAIT. IN THAT CASE, YOU AND I...

...AND EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE WOULD HAVE TO BE A HOST TO THIS PARASITE, RIGHT?

BUT NOW THAT SHE'S EXPLAINED, IT DOES ALIGN WITH THE VILLAGE LEGEND PERFECTLY.

WHEN SHE FIRST TOLD ME ABOUT THE PARASITES, I HONESTLY COULDN'T BELIEVE IT.

THE FACT THAT THE FANATICS ARE GOING SO FAR TO PROTECT THIS SECRET...

...IS EVIDENCE THAT WHAT SHE'S SAYING MUST BE TRUE.

AND WHAT'S MORE, THAT WHITE VAN WAS TAILING RENA.

I SEE. THAT EXPLAINS WHY THE FANATICS ARE SO DESPERATE TO KEEP THEIR SECRET...

SO OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE IS REALLY A LOCAL SICKNESS CAUSED BY PARASITES?

Wha—!? What do you mean?

TO REVIVE FAITH IN OYASHIRO-SAMA...

...THE FANATICS ARE PLANNING SOMETHING EVEN MORE TERRIBLE.

EH?

That's not all, Kei-ichi-kun.

...THAT IS THE TRUE MANIFESTATION OF "OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE."

TOMITAKE-SAN'S DEATH, SCRATCHING AT HIS THROAT UNTIL IT KILLED HIM...

AFTER EXTENSIVE RESEARCH, THEY'VE REVIVED AN EXTREMELY DAMAGING PARASITE.

THEY HAVE THEIR SIGHTS SET ON THE POWER OF THE ANCIENT PARA-SITES.

!!

MOST LIKELY, THEY USED TOMITAKE-SAN AS A GUINEA PIG...

...TO TEST THE PARASITE'S STRENGTH...

...OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE WOULD BECOME A REALITY.

IF A PARASITE WITH PRIMEVAL POWERS WERE TO UNLEASH ITS FURY ONCE AGAIN...

...KILLING A MAN JUST TO BRING BACK A PARASITE !?

WH-WHY WOULD THEY GO SO FAR...

...THE REVIVAL OF OYASHIRO-SAMA THE DEITY.

AND THAT WOULD MEAN...

...TO BRING BACK OYASHIRO-SAMA IN MODERN TIMES.

THE FAITH HAS BEEN ALL BUT LOST, SO NOW THEY'RE ABOUT TO COMMENCE A LARGE-SCALE CEREMONY...

CEREMONY? WHAT KIND OF CEREMONY?

IT IS.

...IT CAN'T BE!

THE FANATICS...

...AND PLUNGE THE VILLAGERS INTO THE CURSE'S HELL!!

...ARE GOING TO SPREAD THE ANCIENT PARASITES THROUGHOUT HINAMIZAWA...

WHA...?

SPREAD THE PARASITES... THROUGH THE WHOLE VILLAGE...!?

GYU (CLENCH)

.....

DO THEY HAVE SOME PLAN FOR AFTER THEY'VE SPREAD THE PARA-SITES?

...I DON'T KNOW EITHER.

...THEN THEY CAN'T REVIVE A RELIGION! THEY CAN'T REVIVE ANYTHING!

B-BUT IF THEY KILL EVERYONE...

WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT!?

...do they intend to die with the rest of the village, in the name of their faith...?

Or as fanatics...

SO ...!

YOU KNOW A DETEC-TIVE, DON'T YOU? OOISHI?

WE CAN'T HANDLE THESE PEOPLE ON OUR OWN!

Let's go to the police.

... Rena ...

...Let's just think about what we should do next.

BUT THE WAY THINGS ARE...

IF WE REPORT THIS, IT MIGHT BACKFIRE, AND WE'LL GET CAUGHT.

WE CAN'T. THE SONOZAKIS' INFLUENCE IS STRONG, EVEN OVER THE POLICE.

ぎゅっ gyu

...
And
...

...
IS THAT OUR ONLY CHOICE ...?

I'M GOING TO GO TO SCHOOL STARTING TOMORROW.

I HAVE TO LIVE MY LIFE LIKE NORMAL...

...OR THE ENEMY MIGHT SUSPECT SOMETHING.

!

...whatever you do, do not tell Mii-chan about this.

...
BUT
...

So we can't say for sure that Mii-chan will be on our side.

THE SONOZAKI FAMILY IS AT THE CENTER OF THIS PLOT.

Why not? Mion is our friend!

from each other...

S-SO I HAVE TO SUSPECT MION...?

Rena...

...WE DON'T KNOW WHO IN HINAMIZAWA MIGHT BE OUR ENEMY ANYMORE.

KANA

KANA

THE UNCOM-FORTABLE, SLEEPLESS NIGHTS CONTINUE.

THIS TOO IS THE SAME

SATOKO IS FAST ASLEEP.

I COULDN'T EAT ANOTHER BITE...

MMNEM-NUH.

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO SPEND A NIGHT LIKE THIS.

CHILDREN MUSTN'T DRINK ALCOHOL, SIR.

RIKA...

...THE ANNOYING ONE IS BACK.

WHY NOT?

THIS LIFE WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER ANYWAY.

SO...

RENA RYUGU STAYED HOME FROM SCHOOL TODAY.

ACCORDING TO THE USUAL PATTERN...

RIKA

KEIICHI TRIED, BUT HE JUST COULDN'T OPPOSE HIS DESTINY.

THE BODY ...

...THE NIGHT OF JUNE 25TH IS WHEN I WILL DIE.

...WILL BE BURNED BLACK AND CUT INTO PIECES.

...RIKA...

...THERE'S NO NEED TO MAKE THAT FACE.

IT'S ONLY WHAT ALWAYS HAPPENS.

BUT...

YES. IT'S WHAT ALWAYS HAPPENS.

SOON ...

...THIS WORLD WILL END TOO...

MIIN (BUZZZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN..

THE NEXT DAY...

I COULDN'T SLEEP A WINK LAST NIGHT...

THERE'S NO WAY I COULD RELAX AFTER HEARING ALL THAT.

...I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT ANY-ONE WOULD BE PLOT-TING TO DESTROY THE VILLAGE.

WHEN I LOOK AT THIS PEACEFUL SCENE...

JUST LIKE SHE SAID SHE WOULD, RENA IS ACTING EXACTLY LIKE NORMAL.

...THAT MION WOULD BE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE.

LET ALONE ...

KEI-CHAN?

WHAT'S WRONG?

S-SORRY.

HEY... WHAT'RE YOU SO SURPRISED FOR?

AAHH-HA-HA-HA...

WELL, I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE OF THIS OLD MAN'S STUNNING BEAUTY.

WHOA!

MION !?

GATAN (CLATTER)

ナ!

ラ!

HUH?

HEY, MION.

...FOR THE CULT DEVOTED TO OYASHIRO-SAMA?

THIS GIRL— MION— WANTS TO SACRIFICE THE VILLAGE...

HUH? NO SNAPPY COME-BACK?

MIIIN (BUZZZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN...

?

RENA TOLD ME NOT TO, BUT I'M GONNA COME RIGHT OUT AND ASK HER.

MION, I HAVE SOMETHING SERIOUS TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.

WHAT'S THE DEAL? WHY ARE YOU CALLING ME OUT BEHIND THE P.E. SHED?

BESIDES, MION IS OUR FRIEND.

I WANT TO TRUST MY FRIENDS.

NOTHING WOULD BE MORE REASSURING THAN HAVING MION ON OUR SIDE.

...THAT MION IS INVOLVED IN THE SONOZAKIS' PLOT...

BUT ON THE OFF CHANCE ...

...MIGHT KILL ME!

...THEN MION...

MION!

IS IT TRUE THAT THE SONOZAKI FAMILY IS PLOTTING TERRORIST ACTS TO PROMOTE FAITH IN OYASHIRO-SAMA!?

BUT I DON'T WANT TO KEEP HIDING THINGS LIKE THIS!!

...PLOTTING BIOTER-RORISM ATTACKS THROUGH-OUT HINA-MIZAWA USING PARASITES !?

TO REVIVE FAITH IN OYASHIRO-SAMA, ARE THE SONOZAKIS ...

WHA ...?

HOW WILL YOU ANSWER, MION !!?

IF I STRIKE RIGHT AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER, SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE A LIE AT THE READY.

シ-!
(SHIN (SILENCE))

HEH...

SHE'S LAUGHING ...

HEH HEH.

HEH HEH HEH.

—!

HEH HEH HEH...

WH-WHAT'S SO FUNNY!!?

BASA

BASA (FLAP)

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH...

HEH HEH HEH!

DON'T TELL ME YOU REALLY...

DON'T TELL ME...

MION ...!

M...

IS MION GOING TO KILL ME...!?

IS IT LIKE RENA SAID...?

あ

AH-HYA!

GAH-HAAAA-HA-HA-HA!!

WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, KEI-CHAN !?

HYA HYA!

HYA HYA!

EH?

ER...UM... THERE ARE PEOPLE DOING RESEARCH ON A PARASITE WITH ANCIENT POWERS.

AND TO REVIVE OYASHIRO-SAMA...

...THEY'RE GONNA SPREAD IT ALL OVER THE VILLAGE IN AN ACT OF TERRORISM...

PARA-SITES? BIOTER-RORISM?

WHERE'D YOU COME UP WITH THAT HILARIOUS STORY!? IT'S LIKE SOME CHEESY BLOCK-BUSTER FROM AMERICA!

HEH HEH HEH!

WH-WHAT KIND OF REACTION IS THAT...?

ERK ...

OHHH! AND THEN WHAT?

OH HO! KEI-CHAN...

.....

THE SONOZAKIS ARE ONE OF THE THREE FAMILIES...

...AND THEY'RE DOING SECRET RESEARCH ...

SHE'S NOT LYING. SHE'S HONESTLY LAUGHING...

...TAKANO-SAN'S BEEN PUTTING IDEAS IN YOUR HEAD, HASN'T SHE?

LISTEN CARE-FULLY.

ALL RIGHT, KEI-CHAN?

PON (PAT)

OH, MAN, THAT FIGURES.

WHA...!? YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS, MIONI?

...IS TEASING YOU, KEI-CHAN.

TAKANO-SAN...

AND WHEN SHE RUNS INTO SOMEBODY WHO WILL TAKE HER SERIOUSLY, THEN SHE'LL REALLY LIGHT INTO 'EM.

SHE MAKES UP RIDICULOUS STORIES BASED ON HINAMIZAWA'S HISTORY.

TAKANO-SAN IS FAMOUS IN THE VILLAGE FOR BEING AN OCCULT FANATIC.

...EH ...?

SOMETHING ABOUT UFOs LANDING IN ANCIENT ONIGA-FUCHI AND THE VILLAGERS BATTLING THE ALIENS.

SHE TOLD THIS OLD MAN ABOUT HER UFO THEORY.

THAT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN IN THIS DAY AND AGE.

ACTUALLY, WE'RE GOING THE OTHER WAY.

SO THE SONOZAKI FAMILY ISN'T PLOTTING AN OYASHIRO-SAMA REFORMATION?

WE'RE PLANNING ON GETTING A HIGH-WAY RUNNING THROUGH HERE BY THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.

RIGHT NOW, THE THREE FAMILIES ARE TALKING ABOUT OPENING UP HINAMIZAWA TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

O-OH... THAT'S ...

AND IT FIT SO PER-FECTLY WITH THE OYASHIRO-SAMA LEGEND...

MHHN (BUZZZZ)

MHN

MHN

MHN

IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ONE PERSON TO GATHER THAT MUCH EVIDENCE.

FOR ONE THING, HOW WOULD ONE LITTLE NURSE LIKE TAKANO-SAN BE ABLE TO CONFIRM THE EXISTENCE OF A PARASITE?

IF THAT WERE TRUE, THE WHOLE COUNTRY WOULD BE TALKING ABOUT IT.

S-SO THE THEORY ABOUT THE INFECTIOUS PARASITES—

THEY SUCCESSFULLY KIDNAPPED THE MINISTER OF CONSTRUCTION'S GRANDSON, DIDN'T THEY!!?

SO... SO WHAT ABOUT THE SONOZAKI FAMILY'S SPECIAL FORCES!?

BUT...

B...

SOMEBODY ELSE DID THE KIDNAPPING, AND WE ALL JUST TALK ABOUT IT LIKE THE SONOZAKIS ORGANIZED IT.

I DON'T KNOW WHO DID IT, BUT IT REALLY DID THE TRICK.

THAT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.

WHA ...!?

LIKE THE WHITE VAN THAT DROVE UP TO THE SCHOOL A LITTLE WHILE AGO?

A WHITE VAN?

BUT... THERE REALLY WAS A WHITE VAN FOL-LOWING RENA...

WHAT !?

WH—

THEY'RE AT THE SCHOOL?

NO! THEY CAN'T BE...

ZA (WHOOSH)

WHAT'S WRONG?

JUST A— KEI-CHAN!

DADA (DASH)

!!

WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE...?

IT'S THE VAN THAT WAS AFTER RENA...

THANKS FOR YOUR PATRONAGE!

WHO THE HELL ARE THESE GUYS...?

HE'S FRIENDS WITH CHIE-SENSEI ...?

WHA ...?

I'M COUNTING ON YOUR SERVICES AGAIN TODAY.

YOU GET MORE GORGEOUS BY THE DAY, SENSEI! GEH-HEH-HEH!

YES, MA'AM! WELL, TIME TO GET STARTED!

OH, MAEBARA-KUN.

CHIE-SENSEI... WHO WAS THAT MAN...?

I ASKED OKONOGI LANDSCAPING TO DO SOME MAINTENANCE ON THE PLANTS BEFORE SUMMER HITS.

HE'S THE GARDENER.

HE ISN'T IN THE SPECIAL FORCES ...?

A GARDENER ...?

I THINK THEY SAID THEY GOT LOST ON THE WAY HOME TRYING TO TAKE A SHORTCUT.

YES. I HAD THEM COME OVER AFTER SCHOOL TO TAKE A LOOK AT THINGS.

SEN-SEI...

...WERE THEY HERE YESTERDAY TOO...?

THAT'S WHY THEY WERE OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NO-WHERE...

...I-IS THAT RIGHT ...?

SO...SO EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED UNTIL NOW ...

...WAS ALL A MISUNDER-STANDING!?

?

THE SONOZAKIS AREN'T PLOTTING ANY CON-SPIRACIES.

THE GUYS I THOUGHT WERE IN THE SPECIAL FORCES ARE GARDENERS.

...WERE JUST TAKANO-SAN'S WILD STORIES.

AND THE PARASITES AND THE OYASHIRO-SAMA FANATICS...

I TOTALLY FELL FOR TAKANO-SAN'S CRAZY HOAX!!

WHAT WAS I THINK-ING?

RENA IS STILL STUCK IN THE FANTASY.

THIS IS BAD...

I BET THAT'S WHY SHE ASSUMED TAKANO-SAN'S STORIES WERE TRUE.

THAT RENA. SHE HASN'T BEEN FEELING WELL.

...OR SHE MIGHT GO OVER THE EDGE AND DO SOME-THING CRAZY.

I HAVE TO HURRY AND CLEAR UP THE MISUNDER-STANDINGS ...

DAMMIT! I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS!!

A LITTLE EARLIER...

ミンミンミン…

WHY ...?

WHY...?

WHY IS THAT WHITE VAN HERE AT SCHOOL!?

SENSEI'S HERE TOO, AFTER ALL...

BUT IF THEY DID THAT, IT WOULD CAUSE A SCENE.

KNOWING THAT I WOULD BE AT THE SCHOOL ...?

THEY COULDN'T HAVE COME TO GET ME, COULD THEY?

は、
HA... (GASP)

THEY'RE FROM THE SONOZAKI FAMILY SPECIAL FORCES...

WHAT'S GOING ON!?

IF SHE'S FRIENDS WITH THEM, THAT MEANS...

SHE'S TALKING TO THEM ABOUT SOMETHING?

CHIE-SEN-SEI...

...CHIE-SENSEI...

...IS ONE OF THEM!?

THAT WOULD EXPLAIN IT.

BUT...

MAYBE CHIE-SENSEI KNOWS THEM BECAUSE THEY REGULARLY DO BUSINESS WITH THE SCHOOL.

IT CAN'T...

THAT CAN'T BE...

GU (CLENCH)

...WHAT IF THAT'S NOT THE REASON?

THAT'S RIGHT...

YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOUR ENEMIES ARE IN HINAMI-ZAWA.

STOP BEING SO NAIVE, RENA RYUGU.

...WHO THE SONOZAKIS BROUGHT IN TO FORCE THE SCHOOL TO STAY OPEN.

...CHIE-SENSEI WAS THE TEACHER ...

...WHEN THE SCHOOL WAS ALMOST SHUT DOWN...

...HAS BEEN BACKED BY THE SONOZAKI FAMILY ALL ALONG!

IN OTHER WORDS, CHIE-SENSEI ...

...TO CATCH ME!!

AND NOW SHE'S WORKING WITH THE MEN IN THE WHITE VAN ...

I HAVE TO RUN...

IA (STEP)

THE PRINCIPAL IS FROM HINAMIZAWA TOO. IT WOULDN'T BE SO STRANGE IF HE WERE LINKED TO THE SONOZAKI TOO.

AND NOT JUST CHIE-SENSEI.

IF I STAY AT SCHOOL...

...THEY'LL GET ME!!

HAA

HAA (HUFF)

HAA

M.IN. (BUZZZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN.

WHAT CHANGED ...?

WHAT CHANGED BETWEEN YESTER-DAY AND TODAY...?

WHY WOULD THEY COME OUT IN THE OPEN TO GET ME TODAY?

!? !? !? HAA HAA

BUT WHY TODAY?

I'M ONE PERSON YOU CAN TRUST.

HA (GASP) は...

ピタ PITA (STOP)...

LAST NIGHT, I TOLD KEIICHI-KUN...

...ABOUT THE SCRAP-BOOK...

NO!

I TALKED!!

IT REACHED THE SONOZAKIS' EARS...

...AND THE SPECIAL FORCES HAVE COME TO TAKE ACTION.

NO, WAIT. HOLD ON, RENA RYUGU.

HOW WOULD THE SONOZAKIS KNOW WHAT I TOLD KEIICHI-KUN...?

BE-
CAUSE
...

BECAUSE
...

...TOLD MII-
CHAN...?

...KEI-
ICHI-
KUN
...

IT
CAN'T
BE.

NO...

キャー...

KATA (SHIVER)

KATA

NO...

KEIICHI-KUN... HE...

KEIICHI-KUN...

...BETRAYED ME?

THAT CAN'T...

...HE BETRAYED ME...

カナカナカナカナカナカナ

カナカナカナカナカナカナ

AT THAT TIME...

...OR HOW ALIEN THE "TRUTH" WRITTEN INTO IT...

...WAS EATING AWAY AT RENA'S MIND...

AND MII-CHAN...

THE SONOZAKI FAMILY IS AFTER THE SCRAPBOOK IN MY POSSES-SION.

KEIICHI-KUN BETRAYED ME...

...THEY'RE TRYING TO USE BIOLOGICAL TERRORISM TO UNLEASH A GREAT DISASTER IN HINAMIZAWA.

TO REVIVE FAITH IN OYASHIRO-SAMA...

IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING, MY DAD AND I AND EVERY-ONE IN THE VILLAGE WILL BE KILLED.

I HAVE TO DO SOME-THING!!

CHAPTER 9: STUPEFACTION

MIIIN (BUZZZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN.

KEI-CHAAAN!

YOU'RE WORRYING TOO MUCH.

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW SERIOUSLY RENA IS TAKING TAKANO-SAN'S HORROR STORIES.

WE'LL ALL LAUGH ABOUT IT IN THE END.

THAT MIGHT BE TRUE...

RENA SUDDENLY LEFT SCHOOL EARLY AND WENT HOME BY HERSELF...

...STILL BELIEVING TAKANO-SAN'S TALL TALE.

I HOPE MION'S RIGHT AND THAT WE'LL ALL LAUGH ABOUT THIS LATER.

BUT...

...AND I WAS TOTALLY FALLING FOR THEM TOO...

...YESTERDAY, RENA WAS COMPLETELY POSSESSED BY TAKANO-SAN'S FANTASIES...

TAKANO-SAN'S SCRAPBOOK HAS SOME KIND OF EVIL POWER...

...THAT DRIVES ANYONE WHO READS IT INSANE.

OH? RENA-SAN ISN'T WITH YOU?

?

...I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.

AND RENA'S BEEN WALKING AROUND WITH IT FOR DAYS.

DIDN'T YOU TELL ME A WHILE AGO THAT RENA-SAN HAD SOMETHING OF KASAI-SAN'S?

WHAT'S UP, YOU TWO?

WHO'S THE GUY IN THE SHADES?

HELLO-ELLO!

...SHION?

OH, THAT'S TOO BAD. RENA WENT HOME A WHILE AGO.

RENA-SAN SAID SHE WANTED TO TALK TO HIM IN PERSON ...

!?

WE WERE JUST AT RENA-SAN'S HOUSE... BUT NO ONE WAS HOME.

SO WE THOUGHT SHE MUST STILL BE AT SCHOOL AND CAME HERE.

OH? SHE DID?

?

RENA'S ...

...NOT AT HOME...?

カナカナカナ…

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS OF YAGOUCHI ...

THEY'RE GONE.

GONE. GONE. GONE.

I THOUGHT I WAS OVER-THINKING IT.

I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD ACTUALLY BE HAPPENING.

BUT THE BODIES...

...ARE GONE!

I KNOW THIS IS WHERE WE BURIED RINA AND TEPPEI.

I'M POSITIVE THIS IS WHERE...

MII-CHAN IS A SONOZAKI. I HAVE NO DOUBT SHE MOVED THE BODIES.

IT WAS MII-CHAN.

BUT WHY?

BECAUSE...

THE FACT THAT SHE'S MOVING SO QUICKLY PROVES IT.

...MII-CHAN MEANS BUSINESS!

...TO GET THEM TO INVES-TIGATE ME AS A SUSPECT.

...SHE WANTS TO GIVE THE BODIES TO THE POLICE...

SIGN: OKINOMIYA POLICE

...I KNOW!

I HAVE TO MAKE MY MOVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TOO...

BUT IF ANYONE MIGHT LISTEN TO ME, IT'S OOISHI-SAN.

IF HE ALREADY KNOWS ABOUT RINA AND TEPPEI'S BODIES, HE MIGHT ARREST ME.

I'LL TELL OOISHI-SAN EVERY-THING.

OOISHI-SAN.

I WILL FIGHT.

I WON'T LET THEM BEAT ME LIKE THIS...!!

IS THIS TRUE, RYUGU-SAN!?

BIO-TER-ROR-ISM!?

...IT SOUNDS LIKE HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT RINA YET.

...BUT I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING.

YES... I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'LL BELIEVE ME...

...ALL DEPENDS ON WHETHER OR NOT I GET OOISHI-SAN ON MY SIDE.

MY ABILITY TO FIGHT THE SONOZAKI CONSPIRACY ...

...and revitalize faith in Oyashiro-sama...

And those people want to use this powerful parasite to create an epidemic ...

PEOPLE ARE CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON IT...

THAT'S INCREDIBLE... SO THERE'S A PARASITE LOCAL TO HINAMIZAWA...

NO, RYUGU-SAN.

I DO BELIEVE YOU.

.....

I know we're talking about the Sonozaki family, but that's going too far...

...YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME...?

SO ...

REALLY ...?

...R...

I mean ...

Yes. It's an out-rageous idea, but I believe it.

WHA ...?

... EH ...?

The Sonozaki Group...

...is, in fact, out looking for you.

According to a reliable source ...

...one of the Sonozaki higher-ups wants to find you.

The Sonozaki Group is a gangster organization that supports the Sonozaki family.

And its leaders are in a frenzy...

...looking for an upstanding girl such as yourself...

I can't think of any reason for that...

...unless what you're saying is true.

MII-CHAN, YOU WOULD GO THAT FAR...?

EVEN THE SONOZAKI GROUP IS AFTER ME...

WE CAN'T LET THEM CARRY OUT THEIR TERRORIST PLOT!!

CAN'T THE POLICE DO SOMETHING TO STOP THEM!?

DAMN THOSE SONOZAKIS!

I DIDN'T THINK THEY WERE THIS CRAZY!!

BUT THAT'S WHOLESALE TERRORISM!

Hmm, there's still not enough proof.

GYUUU (SQUEEZE)

The theories in Miyo Takano's scrapbook are just conjecture.

And the fact that they're after you is no more than circumstantial evidence.

BUT IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING, EVERYONE IN HINAMIZAWA IS GOING TO DIE!

ARE YOU TELLING ME TO SIT BACK AND WATCH IT HAPPEN!?

Calm down, Ryugu-san.

Calm down.

I HAVEN'T BEEN WORKING HERE FORTY YEARS JUST FOR SHOW, AFTER ALL.

PLEASE, COUNT ON ME.

NN-FU-FU!

WITH SUCH A LARGE-SCALE PLOT, THERE'S GOT TO BE A LOOSE THREAD SOMEWHERE.

AND WE'RE GOING TO FIND IT.

PAAAN (SLAM)

OOISHI-SAN...

...ALL RIGHT. I'M COUNTING ON YOU ...

RIGHT NOW, MY ONLY CHOICE IS TO RELY ON OOISHI-SAN'S HELP...

GYU...

YES...TO THINK SHE WAS KILLED FOR EXPOSING A TERRIBLE CONSPIRACY ...

Still, Miyo Takano left us quite the parting gift, didn't she?

There's just one thing that baffles me.

About the way she died...

ACTU-ALLY...

This is a bit of a "summer-time story," but...

...EH?

BANNER: OKONOMIYAKI

BANNERS: ICE

...AFTER THE FESTIVAL ENDED, CORRECT?

...ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING, YOUR GROUP OF FIVE FRIENDS...

...MET WITH JIROU TOMITAKE AND MIYO TAKANO...

We found Takano's burned corpse that evening.

But according to the lab results from the Gifu prefectural police...

...WHAT IS THIS SENSE OF FORE-BODING...?

WHAT ABOUT IT...?

AH... YES. WE TALKED A LITTLE.

...AT THE TIME THE BODY WAS DISCOVERED ...

...SHE HAD ALREADY BEEN DEAD FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

...ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING, MIYO TAKANO...

IN OTHER WORDS ...

EH ...?

...WAS ALREADY DEAD.

WHA ...!!?

ア...

...WAS ALREADY DEAD...?

WHEN I MET HER, TAKANO-SAN...

...IT CAN'T BE...

Well, it could have been a mistake in the lab.

GOKU (GULP)

...

OR WAS IT...?

WAS IT JUST A MISTAKE ...?

OOISHI-SAN!!

THAT OLD SONOZAKI WITCH! WHAT THE HELL IS SHE THINKING ...!!?

BIO-LOGICAL TERROR-ISM...?

GACHA (CLICK)

...

WHAT !?

IT'S TATSUYOSHI KASAI!!

WE'VE IDENTIFIED THE MAN LOOKING FOR REINA RYUGU!

ROGER THAT !!

KUMA-CHAN! WE'RE GOING TO TAKE REINA RYUGU INTO PROTECTIVE CUSTODY!

GET THE UNDER-COVER PATROL CARS!!

KASAI IS THE SONOZAKI GROUP'S NUMBER-TWO MAN ...

...REINA RYUGU. THIS IS STARTING TO LOOK VERY BAD...

WHAT !?

A LITTLE WHILE LATER...

THE POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR RENA!?

Yeah. A lot of under-cover patrol cars have come into the village.

THE POLICE... IT CAN'T BE...

HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?

THEY COULDN'T HAVE?

NO, THEY COULDN'T HAVE.

Did the police find Rina's body!?

...and dispose of them in a secret place.

I had the Sonozakis take the bodies...

Apparently they're going to be the site of a large-scale deforestation project this summer.

...the mountains that we buried them in—

Well, actu-ally ...

HUH...? WHY IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU DO THAT...?

I SEE... THAT'S MY MION.

So I went ahead and took care of it.

APPARENTLY THE POLICE KNEW THAT TEPPEI HOJO HAD GOTTEN CLOSE TO THE RYUGUS.

So why would the police be after Rena?

Of course we do!

MION! WE HAVE TO DO SOME-THING TO PROTECT RENA!

DAMMIT! BUT RENA'S SO VULNER-ABLE RIGHT NOW!

Maybe that's how Rena's name got brought up.

...TO GET TO HER BEFORE THE POLICE DO.

WHEREVER RENA IS, I'LL USE ALL OF THE POWER OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY ...

DON (WHAM)

WE EVEN HAVE THE BEST LAWYERS WORKING FOR THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.

AND AFTER WE'VE FOUND HER, WE'LL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO KEEP HER SAFE.

WE CAN MAKE AS MANY WITNESSES AS WE NEED TO PROVE HER ALIBI.

MION... I KNEW I COULD RELY ON YOU...

... WOW. THE SONOZAKIS REALLY ARE POWERFUL ...

WE WON'T ABANDON OUR FRIEND, NO MATTER WHAT!!

THE DAM WAR GAVE US A LOT OF EXPERIENCE.

I'M ALREADY TAMPERING WITH INFORMATION.

Tampering with information?

THAT SHOULD KEEP THE POLICE DISTRACTED.

I'VE STARTED A FALSE LEAD THAT RENA WAS SEEN AROUND GOGURA.

EH?

But there are things only you can do, Kei-chan.

I FEEL SO PATHETIC, RELYING ON YOU FOR EVERYTHING.

I SEE...

And if she's emotionally worn out, I want you to help her.

When she does, take her under your wing immediately.

...SO SHE MIGHT COME TO YOU FOR HELP.

RENA TRUSTS YOU MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE...

MION... I UNDERSTAND.

THAT'S RIGHT...I HAVE TO PROTECT RENA.

...WHERE ARE YOU...?

RENA...

TAKANO-SAN HAD ALREADY BEEN KILLED BEFORE THE FESTIVAL...

ゴ!!...

...THAT I SAW ON THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL ...?

THEN WHO WAS THE TAKANO-SAN...

IF TAKANO-SAN'S TIME OF DEATH IS CORRECT

—THEN THAT THEORY IS THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES ANY SENSE...

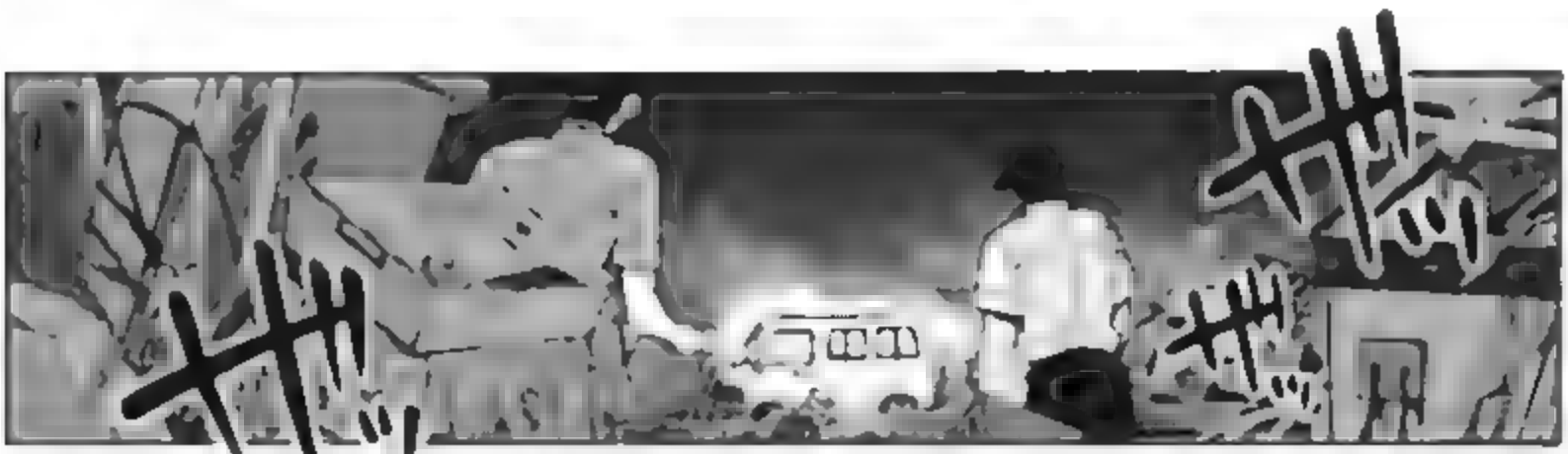
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY WOULD HAVE THAT KIND OF POWER

...MY NECK ITCHES

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AROUND, JUST IN CASE.

—!!

...SHE'S NOT GONNA BE HERE.



THEY'VE COME TO FIND ME...!!

IT'S THE SONOZAKIS ...

...IF THEY LOOK INSIDE THIS CAR, IT'S ALL OVER!

ザッ

ザッ

THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER ...

ドクン

...CALM DOWN! YOU'LL BE FINE AS LONG AS YOU DON'T MAKE A SOUND.

THEY WON'T FIND YOU.

ドクン

ドクン

ドクン

DON'T COME OVER HERE...!!

PLEASE, GO AWAY!

...THIS IS ATSUSHI.

...YES... GOGURA!?

YES, I UNDER-STAND.

WHAT'S UP?

SOME-BODY'S SPOTTED HER.

APPARENTLY REINA RYUGU IS IN GOGURA.

EH ...!?

BEEE

FIRST, WE HAVE TO MEET UP WITH KUMA-CHAN.

STOP WHINING WE'RE GOING BACK.

WHY WOULD THEY MOBILIZE THE ENTIRE FORCE...

...JUST FOR A LITTLE SCRAP-BOOK?

DAMN, WE HAVE TO GO ALL THE WAY THERE TO SEARCH FOR HER?

DAMN IT WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH OFFICERS

SOMEHOW, I MADE IT...

GOSO (RUSTLE)

...THEY WERE SAYING...

BUT...

I'M RIGHT HERE.

APPARENTLY REINA RYUGU IS IN GOGURA.

SO WHY ...!?

R!!! (HUMMM)

R!!!

NOW YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT IT...

CALM DOWN, RENA RYUGU. JUST COOL DOWN.

GYU (SQUEEZE)

...BUT I WAS SEEN IN OGURA.

I'M RIGHT HERE...

...BUT SHE WAS AT THE COTTON DRIFTING.

TAKANO-SAN WAS ALREADY DEAD...

THERE ARE TWO OF ME AND TAKANO-SAN.

THE IMPOS-SIBLE IS HAPPEN-ING—

TAKANO-SAN WROTE...

...IS THE THEORY WRITTEN IN TAKANO-SAN'S SCRAPBOOK.

THE ONLY THING THAT CAN ACCOUNT FOR THIS INEXPLICA-BLE TURN OF EVENTS...

THEY ...

THEY HAVE A MORE TERRIFYING POWER...

...THEY'RE NOT ORDINARY PARA-SITES.

...HUMAN CLONES.

...CAN MAKE...

...THEY ERASE THE HUMANS WHO LEARN THEIR SECRET.

THEN...

...AND REPLACE THEM WITH A COPY!!

...THAT THE ORIGINAL TAKANO-SAN'S CHARRED CORPSE WAS DISCOVERED.

IT WAS A PAINFUL MISTAKE ON THEIR PART...

THAT'S HOW THEY'VE PROTECTED HINAMIZAWA'S SECRET ALL THIS TIME.

THAT WAY, NO ONE WILL NOTICE IF THEY ELIMINATE THE HUMAN WHO LEARNED THEIR SECRET.

IT ALL ADDS UP!!!

IT ADDS UP...

I'M SOMEONE THEY CAN'T ALLOW TO LIVE.

I HAVE THE SCRAP-BOOK REVEALING THEIR EX-ISTENCE.

PAKI (SNAP)

...THEY MADE A COPY OF ME, RENA RYUGU.

AND NEXT...

THEY CREATED HER...

SO THEY'VE CREATED A RENA RYUGU IN GOGURA TO TAKE MY PLACE.

...WHAT ELSE ...?

...AND NOW WHAT?

THEY'LL COME...

...TO ERASE ME...

...AND FIGURE OUT MY NEXT MOVE...

I'LL CONTACT OOISHI-SAN...

AS LONG AS I'M IN MY HIDE-OUT, IT WILL TAKE THEM SOME TIME TO FIND ME.

...NO, IT'S ALL RIGHT.

R...RIKA-CHAN...

YOU'RE THE ONE...

...THEY SENT TO KILL ME...?

RENA RYUGU...

...I HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH YOU.

!!!

...A SYRINGE ...

A...

RIKA-CHAN!!

CHAPTER 10: SECRETS

RIKA-CHAN... YOU'RE THE ONE...

...THEY SENT TO KILL ME...?

MEW!

YOU'RE MAKING A SCARY FACE, RENA, SIR.

VIPAAA BEEEAM

ARE YOU REALLY RIKA-CHAN...?

...WHO ELSE DO I LOOK LIKE, SIR?

BIKU

!

BUT SOME-THING'S NOT RIGHT.

RIKA-CHAN WOULD NEVER COME OUT TO A PLACE LIKE THIS AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT.

IT'S TRUE ...

THE PERSON STANDING IN FRONT OF ME IS RIKA-CHAN.

YOU'RE NOT RIKA-CHAN...

YOU WON'T FOOL ME.

SHE MUST BE...

AND... THAT SYRINGE ...

YOU'RE NOT MY FRIEND RIKA FURUDE!

JUST WHO ARE YOU!?

...NEE.

FROM THE MOMENT I MET YOU, I KNEW YOU WERE PERCEPTIVE.

I'M IMPRESSED, RENA RYUGU.

HEE HEE HEE...

HEE...

YOU'RE THE FIRST ONE TO HAVE SEEN THROUGH ME AND REALIZED THAT I'M NOT RIKA.

COULD IT BE THAT SHE...

TH... THEN ...

...SHE ADMITS THAT SHE'S A FAKE...

SHE ...

SHE'S A CLONE OF RIKA-CHAN...!!?

...WAS CREATED BY THEM?

I HAVE THOUGHT OF IT AS MY OWN NAME FOR QUITE A LONG TIME, AFTER ALL.

...BUT I'M GOING TO GO AHEAD AND CALL MYSELF RIKA ANY-WAY.

CREATURES THAT CAN CLONE HUMANS ...!

THEY REALLY DO EXIST ...

WHA ...!?

WH ...

ONLY ABOUT A HUNDRED YEARS.

NOT LONG.

A LONG TIME...? HOW LONG ...?

WH-WHA ...?

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE AFRAID.

HOWEVER MANY YEARS SHE MAY LIVE, RIKA FURUDE IS JUST A LITTLE GIRL.

WH... WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ...!!?

...IS FILLED WITH A CURE.

BESIDES, THIS SYRINGE ...

KACHA (CLACK)

カチャ

SO I'M THE ONE WHO'S NERVOUS HERE.

AND YOU'VE GONE MAD. YOU MIGHT JUMP ME.

.....

IT'S THE EXACT OPPOSITE...

...OF THE INJECTION THAT KILLED TOMITAKE.

...THAT AN INJECTION KILLED TOMITAKE-SAN...

SH-SHE DIDN'T EVEN HESITATE TO ADMIT ...

ZOKU (CHILL)

THEY ARE THE RING-LEADERS BEHIND OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE!!

IT'S JUST LIKE IN THE SCRAP-BOOK.

I'M "SICK" ...!?

.....

IF I GIVE YOU THIS SHOT, YOU'LL FEEL BETTER.

IT'S TRUE.

YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE SICK, THAT'S ALL.

(POIN)

I KNOW ALL ABOUT HOW YOU OPER-ATE !!!

Y... YOU'RE LYING, YOU'RE LYING!

(BOLT)

YOU'RE LYING !!

BUT THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAP-PEN!

IF YOU USE THAT, I'LL FALL RIGHT INTO YOUR HANDS. I'LL SCRATCH MY THROAT UNTIL I DIE!

THAT SHOT WILL GIVE ME THE GUSHING MAGGOT DIS-EASE!

I'LL FIGHT YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY !!!

I WON'T LET YOU KILL ME!!

IS SHE GOING TO COME AT ME BY FORCE...?

KKH...

KUSU (CHUCKLE)

ﾌｽ...

OH...

.....

HA (STED)

ｻｯ...

WHAT IS SHE SAYING ...?

EH ...?

A FROG AT THE BOTTOM OF A WELL HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

THEN DO AS YOU WISH.

... BUT I'M TIRED NOW ...

I USED TO BE DESPERATE TO FIX THIS MADDENING WORLD...

I HAVE NO MORE INTEREST IN "THIS" RENA RYUGU.

I'LL MAKE SURE THINGS WORK OUT WITH THE "NEXT" RENA RYUGU.

THE NEXT...

...RENA RYUGU...?

ZAWA (MURMUR)

BUT YOU KEEP DOING YOUR VERY BEST TO SURVIVE.

THIS HINAMI-ZAWA WILL END SOON TOO.

AND WHEN I DIE, THE NEXT RENA RYUGU WILL APPEAR AS IF NOTHING EVER HAPPENED ...!!

ARE THEY READY TO REPLACE ME SO SOON?

...SHE CAN'T MEAN ...

...THE CLONE OF ME THAT WAS SPOTTED IN GOGURA?

GOOD-BYE...

PARIN (SHATTER)

...."THIS" RENA RYUGU.

WE ARE FRIENDS IN ALMOST EVERY SCENARIO, AFTER ALL.

HEE HEE HEE!

LET'S BE FRIENDS WHEN YOU'RE THE "NEXT" RENA RYUGU, OKAY?

TAKANO-SAN'S THEORIES... WERE ALL CORRECT...

.....

THEY REPLACE HUMANS WITH CLONES THEY'VE MADE...

...AND CONTROL HINAMI-ZAWA...

I HAVE TO HURRY...

ガッ ガッ ガッッ

...

SHE SAID THERE WOULD BE A "NEXT" RENA RYUGU.

THAT RIKA CLONE ADMITTED IT OPENLY.

AND I WON'T LET THEM HAVE THEIR WAY WITH HINA-MIZAWA.

I WON'T LET THERE BE A "NEXT" RENA RYUGU.

I HAVE TO GET AWAY FROM HERE, FAST.

EVENTU-ALLY, THE "RENA" IN GOGURA WILL COME TO TAKE MY PLACE.

I HAVE TO STOP THEM!!

I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH. I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN STAND AGAINST THEM.

(RACK CLICK)

...WHY AM I SWEATING SO MUCH?

BOR.

BOR.

KKH... STILL...

BOR. SCRATCH

BUT IT'S DARK, AND I CAN'T SEE.

I HAVE TO HURRY AND GET MY THINGS TOGETHER SO I CAN LEAVE.

JUST FOR NOW, I'LL TURN ON MY LAMP...

...I HAVE NO CHOICE. JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE...

BAH (FUMBLE)

BAH

ZO (CHI...)

EEK !?

WHEN I WIPED OFF MY NECK, IT WASN'T SWEAT ...

...IT CAN'T BE.

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY...?

ARE THOSE MY HAND-PRINTS ...?

C-

CALM DOWN!

DOKKUN

DOKKUN (BADUM)

IT WAS BLOOD...

R
MMMMM
R

I HAVE TO HURRY AND HIDE HER!!
THE POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR RENA.
DASH!

THAT SCRAP-BOOK IS NOT NORMAL.
SHE STILL BELIEVES EVERYTHING IN TAKANO-SAN'S SCRAP-BOOK.

IT EVEN HAD ME THOROUGHLY CONVINCED FOR A WHILE.

IT HAS SOME KIND OF EVIL POWER TO DRIVE ITS READERS INSANE.

I HAVE TO SNAP RENA OUT OF IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE...

...OR I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN THAT WE WON'T BE ABLE TO FIX!!

GASA (RUSTLE)

...I THINK SHE'D BE HERE IN THE TRASH HEAP...

THAT RENA. IF SHE'S ANYWHERE ...

HAA (HUFF)

HAA

HAA

RENA ...!!

Y... YOU ...!?

ギュ

IT'S COVERED IN BLOOD ...!!

WH... WHAT HAP- PENED TO YOUR NECK?

I'M GETTING ALL KINDS OF VISITORS TONIGHT.

NOW IT'S KEIICHI- KUN?

STAY BACK !!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

EH?

THE POISON ...

I WOULDN'T EXPECT ANY LESS OF MI- CHAN.

...WOW, SHE REALLY GOT ME.

WHA...?

...POISONED ME!

MII-CHAN...

IT HAD THE SAME POISON IN IT THAT KILLED TOMITAKE-SAN.

THE TAMAGOYAKI IN THE LUNCH MII-CHAN GAVE ME THE OTHER DAY.

SHE'S TRYING TO ERASE ME TO CARRY OUT "THEIR" GOALS.

MII-CHAN IS ONE OF THE SONOZAKIS.

MION WOULDN'T DO THAT...

WH... WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, RENA?

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO RINA AND TEPPEI'S BODIES.

I'M POSITIVE MII-CHAN DID SOMETHING.

THE BODIES WE BURIED IN THE MOUNTAINS. THEY'RE GONE.

SHE WANTS TO USE THOSE BODIES TO GET THE POLICE TO COME AFTER ME.

!!

WAIT, RENA! LIM...

IT'S TRUE THAT MION HID THE BODIES.

RENA DOESN'T KNOW THAT MION DISPOSED OF THE BODIES.

OH NO ...

BUT LISTEN! SHE HAD A REASON!

...SO IT IS TRUE...?

...AND THEY MIGHT HAVE FOUND THE BODIES, SO...

THE FORESTRY OFFICES ARE PLANNING SOME DEFORESTATION IN THAT AREA OVER THE SUMMER...

THAT IS THE KIND OF DIRTY GAME SHE PLAYS.

SHE WANTS TO ACT LIKE A NICE GIRL IN FRONT OF YOU, KUNIOKI-KUN!

あはは AH HA HA!

SO THAT'S HER EXCUSE?

PFFT... AH-HA-HA!

THEY'LL DO ANY-THING TO ERASE ME!!

MII-CHAN MADE UP THE WHOLE STORY ABOUT DEFORES-TATION!

WHAT'S GOING ON...? OH MAN, RENA.

THE SCRAP-BOOK'S HOLD ON HER IS GETTING STRONGER AND STRONGER ...

.....

RENA...

...WHY DON'T YOU LIE DOWN FOR A WHILE AND GET SOME REST...?

...HEY, RENA ...

SICK ...?

YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE TIRED, AND IT'S MAKING YOU SICK, THAT'S ALL...

...IT'S TRUE. I AM COMING DOWN WITH THE GUSHING MAGGOT SICKNESS...

...BECAUSE OF MII-CHAN'S POISON.

...THAT'S WHAT THE RIKA CLONE TOLD ME TOO.

I HAVE TO GO... I DON'T HAVE ANY MORE TIME.

YORO (STAGGER)

G... GUSHING MAGGOT SICKNESS ...?

...WHAT? YOUR CLONE...?

...TO KILL ME.

MY CLONE WILL BE HERE SOON...

AND I'M THEIR NEXT TARGET.

THEY'RE ALL READY TO MAKE THE SWITCH.

MIYO-SAN AND RIKA-CHAN HAVE ALREADY FALLEN INTO THEIR HANDS.

IT'S... A SPARE ME THAT THEY CRE-ATED.

WHO ARE "THEY"...?

...WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT...?

THEY ARE...

THEY HAVE OUTRAGEOUS, TERRIFYING POWER—THE ABILITY TO MAKE COPIES OF PEOPLE.

BA (LOOM)

...THEIR TRUE IDENTITY.

...I CAN TELL YOU, KEI-ICHI-KUN ...

SFX: GU (CLENCH)

...AND THEY'RE NOT THE SONOZAKI FAMILY'S SPECIAL FORCES.

THEY'RE NOT PARA-SITES...

...
ALIENS
...!!

.....!!

.....

THEY'VE ALREADY BEGUN THEIR INVASION OF EARTH.

OYASHIRO-SAMA WAS REALLY AN ALIEN FROM OUTER SPACE TOO.

...
RENA... YOU...

...YOU CAN'T POS-SIBLY BELIEVE THAT.

ALI...

AND WHEN A HUMAN FINDS OUT THEIR SECRET, THEY CLONE HIM OR HER AND MAKE A REPLACE-MENT.

THEY'VE TAKEN CONTROL OF HINAMIZAWA BY INHABIT-ING HUMAN HOSTS AS PARASITES.

A COPY OF RIKA-CHAN WAS JUST HERE!

AND SHE ADMITTED THAT SHE CAME FROM SPACE!!

BA (BAM)

...I REFUSE TO LET THEM BEAT ME.

BUT EVEN IF NO ONE IN THE WORLD BELIEVES ME...

...YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, DO YOU...? IT GOES AGAINST ALL COMMON SENSE, AFTER ALL.

WHA ...?

I WILL...

...SAVE YOU AND THE OTHERS!

SHE SIN-CERELY BELIEVES TAKANO-SAN'S OCCULT STORIES.

THAT RENA.

—NH...!!

IT CAN'T BE JUST THE SCRAP-BOOK.

SHE'S SO FAR GONE.

...BUT THE TRUTH IS...

I THOUGHT I HAD SAVED RENA...

GIRI CLENCH!

HER MIND CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE.

THE INCIDENT HAS BEEN PLAGUING RENA ALL THIS TIME.

...I DIDN'T EVEN COME CLOSE...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, KEIICHI-KUN?

?

RENA ...!

DAM-MIT ...!

PAN (SLAP)

RENA! SNAP OUT OF IT...!

K... KEIICHI-KUN...?

OUR GROUP OF FRIENDS ALL JOINED HANDS...

...AND ACKNOWLEDGED EACH OTHER AS FAMILY.

DID YOU FORGET ALREADY ?

IT HAPPENED RIGHT HERE, JUST A FEW DAYS AGO.

GYU (CLENCH)

.....

...EVEN IF THE WHOLE WORLD REFUSES TO BELIEVE...

...THEN I WILL BELIEVE IN YOU, RENA.

IF YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT ALIENS ARE INVADING THE EARTH ...

.....!

BUT LOOK. I WANT YOU TO LISTEN TO ME, YOUR FRIEND AND YOUR ALLY.

RENA. I AM YOUR FRIEND...

...AND YOUR NUMBER-ONE ALLY.

...IS A COMPLETE SHAM THAT SHE TOTALLY MADE UP.

THAT SCRAPBOOK TAKANO-SAN GAVE YOU...

...SO SHE WAS MESSING WITH YOU. THAT'S ALL...!

YOU LISTENED TO HER SERIOUSLY ...

THE SCRAPBOOK SHE GAVE YOU WAS NOTHING MORE THAN HER LATEST MASTERPIECE.

TAKANO-SAN IS JUST AN OCCULT FANATIC WHO WRITES UP HER NEW THEORIES AND GOES AROUND TRYING TO GET PEOPLE TO READ THEM.

YOU'RE SAYING IT WAS ALL MADE-UP? IT WAS ALL A LIE?

WHAT CAUSED TOMITAKE-SAN'S DEATH? AND WHAT ABOUT THE SONOZAKI FAMILY? AND RIKA-CHAN?

WHY WAS SHE ALIVE ON THE NIGHT OF THE FESTIVAL?

...IF IT'S JUST A STORY, THEN WHY WAS TAKANO-SAN KILLED?

GU (CLENCH)

RIGHT NOW, TRUST ME!

STOP FORCING ALL THE PIECES TO FIT TOGETHER!

I WILL NEVER!

BETRAY MY FRIEND !!

カタ KATA

カタ KATA

KATA (TREMBLE)

カタ

.....

BOTO (CLINK)

!!

WHAT IF IT ALL REALLY IS JUST A MISUNDER-STAND-ING...?

BUT WHAT IF THE PARA-SITES AND THE ALIENS—

...YET HE WANTS ME TO BELIEVE HIM?

HE... HAS NO GROUNDS FOR IT...

...IF WHAT HE SAYS IS TRUE...

IT WOULD BE SO NICE...

THEN I CAN GO BACK TO KEIICHI-CHAN AND MII-CHAN.

I CAN GO BACK TO MY FRIENDS...

HAVE YOU FORGOT-TEN, RYUGU-SAN?

...THIS MAN'S PAST.

THAT'S RIGHT... OOISHI-SAN TOLD ME...

ABOUT KEIICHI MAEBARA...

DON'T TRUST KENICHI WAS BACK ...!!

DON'T LET HIM FOOL YOU. RENA IT'LL KILL

THAT'S RIGHT. DON'T BE DECEIVED.

WHAT KIND OF PERSON THIS MAN IS.

ARE YOU OKAY, RENA ...!!?

ARE

DON'T TOUCH ME.

YOU FILTH.

"FRIENDS" THIS, "FRIENDS" THAT— YOU NEVER SHUT UP...

R... RENA...?

I WOULDN'T HIDE ANYTHING FROM YOU.

...NO. OF COURSE NOT.

...FRIENDS DON'T HIDE THINGS FROM EACH OTHER, DO THEY?

...SAY, KEIICHI-KUN...

YOU'RE LYING.

I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT.

I KNOW WHAT YOU WERE DOING BEFORE YOU CAME TO HINAMIZAWA, KEIICHI-KUN.

EH...?

...LITTLE GIRLS, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU ONLY WENT AFTER ...

ZAWA (SHUDDER)

...DON'T YOU AGREE?

IT MIGHT BE EVEN MORE SHOCKING THAN THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS.

I'D BETTER TELL RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO-CHAN TO BE CAREFUL AROUND YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU...?

WHA ...

MR. CRIMINAL...

...BEHIND THE SERIES OF ATTACKS ON SMALL CHILDREN?

.....!!!

I CAN'T BELIEVE THERE WAS SUCH A DANGEROUS PERSON SO CLOSE TO ME.

CAN YOU?

...BEHIND THE SERIES OF ATTACKS ON SMALL CHILDREN?

MR. CRIMI-NAL....

CHAPTER 11: MEMORIES

YOU WERE A TERRIBLE PERSON BEFORE YOU CAME TO HINAMIZAWA, KEIICHI-KUN.

OOISHI-SAN INVESTIGATED EVERYONE.

...GET BEHIND HER...

YOU WOULD MAKE SURE NO ONE ELSE WAS AROUND...

...AND GO AFTER SMALL CHILDREN.

YOU WOULD STEAL OUT IN THE DARK OF NIGHT...

...AND SHOOT HER WITH A MODEL GUN!!

WHAT COULD BE SO FUN ABOUT THAT?

BUT IT WAS FUN. THAT'S WHY YOU KEPT DOING IT FOR SOOOO LONG.

NNNGH ...

SO YOU CAN'T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANYTHING UNLESS YOUR PARENTS ARE WITH YOU?

YOUR FATHER IS RICH, SO HE PAID A LOT OF MONEY TO SETTLE OUT OF COURT.

YOU WENT WITH YOUR PARENTS TO TURN YOURSELF IN.

AND YET, SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY, YOU COULDN'T IGNORE YOUR CONSCIENCE ANY LONGER.

BILL: JAPANESE BANKNOTE TEN THOUSAND YEN

AH HA HA HA HA !!

AND YOU LET MONEY TAKE CARE OF EVERY-THING, MOVED FAR AWAY, AND HAD A CLEAN SLATE.

IT MUST BE NICE TO BE RICH!

WHY DOES THAT...

...HAVE TO COME UP NOW...?

AUGH ...!

WHY ...?

POTA (DRIP)

ZAWA ザワ

ZAWA ザワ

ZAWA (MURMUR) ザワザワ...

SIGN: INTRAMURAL TEST RANKINGS

学内模試結果発表

...I HAD NO TALENT FOR ANYTHING BUT STUDYING.

BEFORE I MOVED TO HINA-MIZAWA...

I KEPT STUDYING OUT OF A STUPID DESIRE TO LOOK DOWN ON MY WHOLE CLASS.

AS MY GRADES WENT UP, I BECAME SATURATED WITH MY OWN SENSE OF SUPERI-ORITY.

I LIKED HOW IT FELT.

IT MADE MY PARENTS HAPPY, AND MY TEACHER PAMPERED ME.

...I STARTED THINKING THAT I WAS THE GREATEST PERSON IN THE SCHOOL.

SO EVENTUALLY ...

THEY WERE TOP IN THE ENTIRE SCHOOL.

BEFORE I KNEW IT, MY GRADES WEREN'T ONLY TOP IN MY CLASS—

...THAT DIDN'T LAST LONG EITHER.

HOW-EVER ...

MY CLASS-MATES GRADUALLY GOT TIRED OF SINGING MY PRAISES.

MY PARENTS AND TEACHERS STARTED DEMANDING MORE AND MORE OF ME.

AND THE PLEASURE I TOOK IN LOOKING DOWN ON OTHERS FADED FAST.

THE BURDENS OF STUDYING JUST KEPT INCREASING.

IT WAS JUST THAT I WAS AVERAGE IN SPORTS AND AVERAGE IN A FIGHT, SO STUDYING WAS THE ONLY WEAPON I HAD TO HELP ME STAND ABOVE THE REST.

I NEVER EVEN LIKED STUDY-ING TO BEGIN WITH.

IF I WASN'T GETTING PRAISE THERE WASN'T ANY POINT

I KEPT STUDYING, BUT I DIDN'T GET ANY PRAISE FOR IT.

...IN A LIFE STEEPED IN STUDY.

I COULDN'T SEE THE VALUE ANYMORE

...BY THIS "WEAPON."

I WAS IRRE-SISTIBLY CHARMED

...I FOUND IT.

THEN ONE DAY...

THIS MODEL GUN.

IT HELPED ME RELIEVE STRESS.

BAN

BAN (BANG)

IT WAS JUST CUTE WHEN I WAS SHOOTING THROUGH CARDBOARD BOXES.

BOSU (BOFF)

BOSU

⚠ INSTRUCTIONS: Please read carefully

- **Please be aware of your surroundings and use in a safe place.**
- **Do not shoot at people. There is a risk of injury or loss of eyesight.**

BUT ...

AND MAYBE THAT RE-BELLION WARPED MY MIND.

I WANTED TO REBEL AGAINST MY PARENTS, WHO FORCED ME TO STUDY.

MY HEART LEAPED AT THOSE WORDS.

...THIS PART IN THE INSTRUCTION MANUAL...

THE "DO NOTS"...

BUT I WAS A COWARD. I DIDN'T HAVE THE COUR-AGE.

I COULD HAVE JUST TOLD MY PARENTS THAT I DIDN'T LIKE STUDYING.

GUSHA (CRUMPLE)

THAT'S WHY I...

...STARTED USING MY MODEL GUN...

...TO SHOOT PEOPLE.

I DIDN'T HAVE THE LEAST INTENTION OF HURTING ANYONE...

...BUT I RELISHED SEEING MY VICTIMS RUN AWAY IN FEAR.

KYAAA!

THAT HURTS!!

I WAS STUDYING. I WAS DOING A VERY GOOD THING...

...SO IT DIDN'T MATTER IF I WAS ALSO SHOOTING PEOPLE.

THAT WAY I DIDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THEM COMING FOR PAYBACK.

MY TARGETS WERE GIRLS YOUNGER THAN ME.

FLAGS: SAFETY

PEOPLE STARTED FEARING THE SERIES OF ATTACKS ON SMALL CHILDREN.

EVEN-TUALLY, WORD GOT OUT.

WHEN I FOUND A TARGET, I'D SHOWER HER WITH BULLETS.

I WOULD SLIP OUT IN THE DARK OF NIGHT AND CHOOSE A PLACE WITH NO ONE AROUND.

BAN (BANG!

BAN

IT FELT GOOD. IT WAS FUN.

THE STRESS OF STUDYING FADED AWAY.

MY SATISFACTION GREW.

IT WAS THE SAME PLEASURE I'D FELT WHEN MY GRADES WENT UP AND EVERYONE FAWNED OVER ME.

I'LL DELIVER HER PUNISHMENT.

NOW. WHERE IS THERE A CARELESS BRAT WANDERING AROUND BY HERSELF?

BAN

FEAR ME!

RUN FROM ME!!

EH...?

AAHHH!

AAHH!

UWAAHH!

BOTA (DRIP)

ボタ

BOTA

ボタ

MOMMY !!

IT HURTS!

IT HURTS!

EEP ...!!

DA (DASH)

I HEARD VOICES OVER THIS WAY!!

WHAT'S WRONG !?

HA (GASP)

THE BULLET HIT HER RIGHT IN THE EYE...

BLOOD ...

I HAVE TO TAKE HER TO THE HOSPITAL ...

TH... THE HOSPI-TAL ...

AAAHHH!

...DID I COME TO REALIZE WHAT A TERRIBLE THING I WAS DOING.

ONLY AFTER SERIOUSLY INJURING SOMEONE...

IS THAT GIRL OKAY?

HOW COULD I BE SO STUPID!?

HOW COULD I BE SO IMMATURE!?

WHAT IF SHE LOSES SIGHT IN THAT EYE?

AND MY OLD MAN HIT ME SO HARD IT MADE MY CHEEK SWELL.

MY MOM CRIED.

...I COULDN'T BEAR THE WEIGHT OF MY CRIMES, AND I CONFESSED EVERYTHING TO MY PARENTS.

LATE THAT NIGHT ...

I ATONED FOR MY CRIME.

MY PARENTS CAME WITH ME AS I PRESENTED MYSELF TO THE POLICE.

...DAD SUGGESTED WE MOVE...

A WHILE AFTER THAT...

...AND NEW FRIENDS.

FRESH AIR, CLEAR BLUE SKIES...

...AND I STARTED MY NEW LIFE HERE IN HINA-MIZAWA.

I VOWED I WOULD NEVER MAKE THOSE MISTAKES AGAIN...

EVERY DAY WAS A HAPPY ONE.

I WAS REALLY, TRULY GLAD TO HAVE FRIENDS.

THIS TIME, I'LL MAKE IT WORK. THAT'S WHAT I DECIDED.

I WON'T EVER MAKE A MISTAKE IN THIS VILLAGE.

BUT YOU WERE HIDING IT.

YOU WERE LYING.

BUT YOU NEVER ASKED A WORD TO US ABOUT IT.

YOU WERE SACRIFICED FOR SUPPER BY THOSE MONSTERS AND--

AREN'T WE DON'T NEED THINGS FROM EACH OTHER, SO THAT?

THAT MEANS, KENICHI-KUN....

...ARE NOT MY FRIEND !!

... YOU ...

...RENA...

GAKU

GAKU (SHAKE)

ガク

ガク

...R...

...WITH COLD EYES LIKE I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE...

...IS LOOKING DOWN ON ME...

...THAT KIND, SWEET RENA ...

...I DON'T NEED TO TAKE ORDERS FROM SOMEONE WHO'S NOT MY FRIEND.

WITH EYES... AS IF SHE WERE LOOKING AT SOME FILTHY OBJECT ...

DAM-
MIT,
DAM-
MIT!

...NGH...
AAAH...

IT'S TRUE
THAT I WAS
HIDING MY
PAST.

YOU'RE
GOING TO
LEAVE ME
ALONE
NOW.

UNDER-
STAND?

...FOR
ME TO
HIDE
IT...?

BUT
WAS IT
WRONG...

...AND THAT'S NEVER BOTHERED ME.

I DON'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE'S BACK-GROUNDS ...

...IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US NOW.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO RENA BEFORE...

I DON'T KNOW ANY-THING ABOUT RENA'S PAST.

EVEN RENA JUST MOVED HERE TO HINAMI-ZAWA A YEAR AGO.

GU (CLENCH)

EVEN IF...

EVEN IF... RENA BEAT UP SOME OF HER CLASS-MATES...

...OR WENT AROUND BREAKING ALL THE GLASS IN HER SCHOOL...

...I WOULDN'T LOOK AT RENA LIKE SHE WAS FILTHY, WOULD I?

I WOULDN'T, WOULD I?

I WOULDN'T, RIGHT...?

...I'M LYING ...

I'M LYING ...

...I WOULD BE AFRAID OF HER. I'D KEEP MY DISTANCE...

IF I KNEW THAT MY KIND, SWEET RENA HAD A PAST LIKE THAT...

BUT I WOULD REJECT RENA...

SHE'S MY DEAREST FRIEND AND COMPANION...

...MY CLOSEST ALLY.

...I CAN'T ARGUE WITH HER.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH RENA MAY DESPISE ME...

...IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT RENA WOULD REJECT ME.

SO ...

NO MATTER WHERE I GO, I'LL ALWAYS BE A DIRTY, ROTTEN PHANTOM SHOOTER.

I CAN'T CHANGE MY PAST NOW.

THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.

I CAN'T BE FRIENDS WITH THEM ANYMORE.

THE CRIMES I'VE COMMITTED...

...CAN NEVER BE UNDONE FOR AS LONG AS I LIVE...

THERE ARE RIDICULOUS RUMORS GOING AROUND THAT SHE WAS ABDUCTED BY DEMONS.

I WONDER WHERE RENA WENT.

THE NEXT DAY.

MIIIN (BUZZZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN

...I COULDN'T SLEEP ALL NIGHT.

STRUCK BY WHAT RENA SAID TO ME YESTERDAY...

GU (CLENCH)

HEY, KEI-CHAN, ARE YOU LISTENING?

.....

...YOU'RE NOT MY FRIEND.

IF YOU HIDE THINGS FROM ME...

...BUT WE MIGHT NEVER BE ABLE TO LAUGH TOGETHER AGAIN...

THEY'RE SO FRIENDLY AND CHATTY WITH ME NOW...

IF I TELL THEM ABOUT IT, I JUST KNOW THEY'LL HATE ME.

...MY FILTHY PAST...

...THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TELL YOU.

SO ...

...I CAN'T KEEP DECEIVING THEM.

BUT I...

I WANT YOU ALL...

...TO KNOW MY PAST.

... CONFESSED EVERYTHING.

MIIIN (BUZZZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN

... THEN I...

シン…

SHIN
(SILENCE)

I'M SORRY FOR HIDING IT UNTIL NOW...

YEAH. IT'S TRUE...

...IS THAT...

... TRUE ...?

BE-CAUSE I...

...BUT I COULDN'T KEEP QUIET ABOUT IT ANY LONGER.

...I DON'T WANT TO HIDE THINGS FROM MY FRIENDS ANYMORE.

I TOLD THEM EVERY-THING...

...BUT I'M GLAD I DID THIS...

NOW I CAN'T GO BACK TO MY FRIENDS ANYMORE.

THEY'RE ALL LOOK-ING AT ME WITH COLD EYES.

...I HAVE ONE LITTLE QUESTION FOR YOU.

SO, KEI-CHAN...

EH?

THE LONGER YOU LIVE, THE MORE THINGS HAPPEN THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT.

IF SOME-ONE CAN'T CALL ME A FRIEND UNLESS THEY KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT MY PAST...

...REALLY SO WRONG?

IS HIDING THINGS FROM YOUR FRIENDS...

...THEN I DON'T NEED FRIENDS LIKE THAT.

BUT ...

YOU HAVE TO CONFESS YOUR SINS IN ORDER TO BE FORGIVEN.

KEI-ICHI.

EH ...?

BUT THEN...

...ONCE YOU'VE CON-FESSED A SIN AND BEEN FORGIVEN ...

...YOU DON'T NEED TO CONFESS IT ANYMORE, SIR.

...AND GOT YOUR SCOLDING, DIDN'T YOU?

I MEAN, YOU WENT TO THE POLICE...

RIKA IS EXACTLY RIGHT!

RIKA-CHAN ...

IF YOU'VE ALREADY ATONED...

...THEN YOUR CRIME IS OVER, KEIICHI-SAN.

WHA ...?

I TOLD THEM EVERYTHING, SO...

...WHY AREN'T THEY CONDEMNING ME...?

IF YOU TURNED YOURSELF IN AND ACCEPTED THE CONSEQUENCES...

...THEN YOU'VE DONE YOUR JOB, KEI-CHAN.

NOW ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS ENGRAVE IT ON YOUR HEART AND TUCK IT AWAY IN YOUR MIND.

THAT'S RIGHT.

...THERE ARE MOUNTAINS OF THINGS THAT I WOULD LIKE TO KEEP SECRET!

I MEAN, SPEAKING OF EMBARRASSING STORIES FROM THE PAST...

ヨーOHHHH!

HO! HO!

WHA ...!!?

NIPAAA (BEEEAM)

SATOKO ESPECIALLY HAS LOTS AND LOTS, SIR!

...WHAT SATOKO SAID WAS REALLY GOOD.

DID YOU CATCH IT, KEI-CHAN?

I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE!

YOU DO TOO, RIKA! YOU DO TOO!

NO, NO!

THE PART ABOUT WANTING TO KEEP THE PAST A SECRET?

.....

THE PART WHERE EVERYONE HAS SECRETS!

PACHIN (WINK)

I'M-I ★

...THEN LIFE IS A CYCLE OF TRIAL AND ERROR.

I THINK THAT UNLESS YOU GREW UP IN A COMPLETELY STERILIZED ROOM OR SOMETHING ...

EVERYONE'S MADE A LOT OF MISTAKES AND FAIL-URES THAT THEY DON'T WANT TO TELL ANYONE.

...NO, NO, IT GOES FOR EVERYONE IN OUR CLASS.

THAT DOESN'T ONLY GO FOR YOU, KEI-CHAN.

IT GOES FOR ME, SATOKO, RIKA-CHAN...

...YOU BECOME A WONDERFUL PERSON, THEN IT'S ALL OKAY.

...AFTER ALL THAT...

AND IF...

WE ALL EXPERI-ENCE LOTS OF GOOD THINGS AND LOTS OF BAD THINGS.

PON (PAT)

ぽん

MION...

IF WE CAN NEVER ATONE FOR OUR PAST MISTAKES...

...THEN WHY IN THE WORLD ARE WE EVEN ALIVE?

...THEN WHY SHOULD YOU BE ASHAMED?

NO MATTER WHAT YOUR PAST, IF YOU'RE A WONDERFUL PERSON NOW...

SHE REGRETS THAT, AND NOW SHE'S DOING HER BEST, SIR.

...SATOKO WAS VERY SPOILED IN THE PAST.

RIKA ...

SO IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT SHE WAS LIKE IN THE PAST, SIR.

ぎゅうっ GYUU (HUG)

THE SATOKO WE HAVE NOW IS VERY WONDERFUL.

DURING THE DAM WAR, THIS OLD MAN WOULD THROW BRICKS.

I WAS A REGULAR AT THE POLICE HOLDING CELLS.

BESIDES, SHOOTING PEOPLE WITH A MODEL GUN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT? THAT'S CUTE.

MEOW, MEOW!

MII USED TO BE A NOTORIOUS BAD KITTY, SIR.

.....!

AND THAT GOES FOR YOU TOO, KEIICHI, SIR.

I HURT SOMEONE...

...BUT I DID SOMETHING REALLY TERRIBLE.

IT DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH MII NOW.

...BUT THAT WAS IN THE PAST.

YOU PLAY WITH US, AND YOU EVEN HELP US WITH OUR SCHOOLWORK.

BUT YOU'RE A GOOD GUY NOW, RIGHT?

...I HID IT FROM YOU ALL THIS TIME.

BUT EVEN THOUGH I DID SOMETHING SO AWFUL...

...BECAUSE YOU WERE WITH US.

BUT WE WERE ALL SAVED AT THE TRASH HEAP THE OTHER DAY...

... DOESN'T MATTER TO US, SIR.

...WHAT HAPPENED WHERE YOU USED TO LIVE...

...IS OUR PRECIOUS, IRREPLACEABLE FRIEND, SIR.

BECAUSE THE KEIICHI WE SEE NOW...

...EVEN AFTER EVERY-THING I'VE DONE...

EVEN...

...THEY STILL CALL ME THEIR FRIEND ...

... AFTER EVERY-THING ...

...WE'RE STILL FRIENDS...

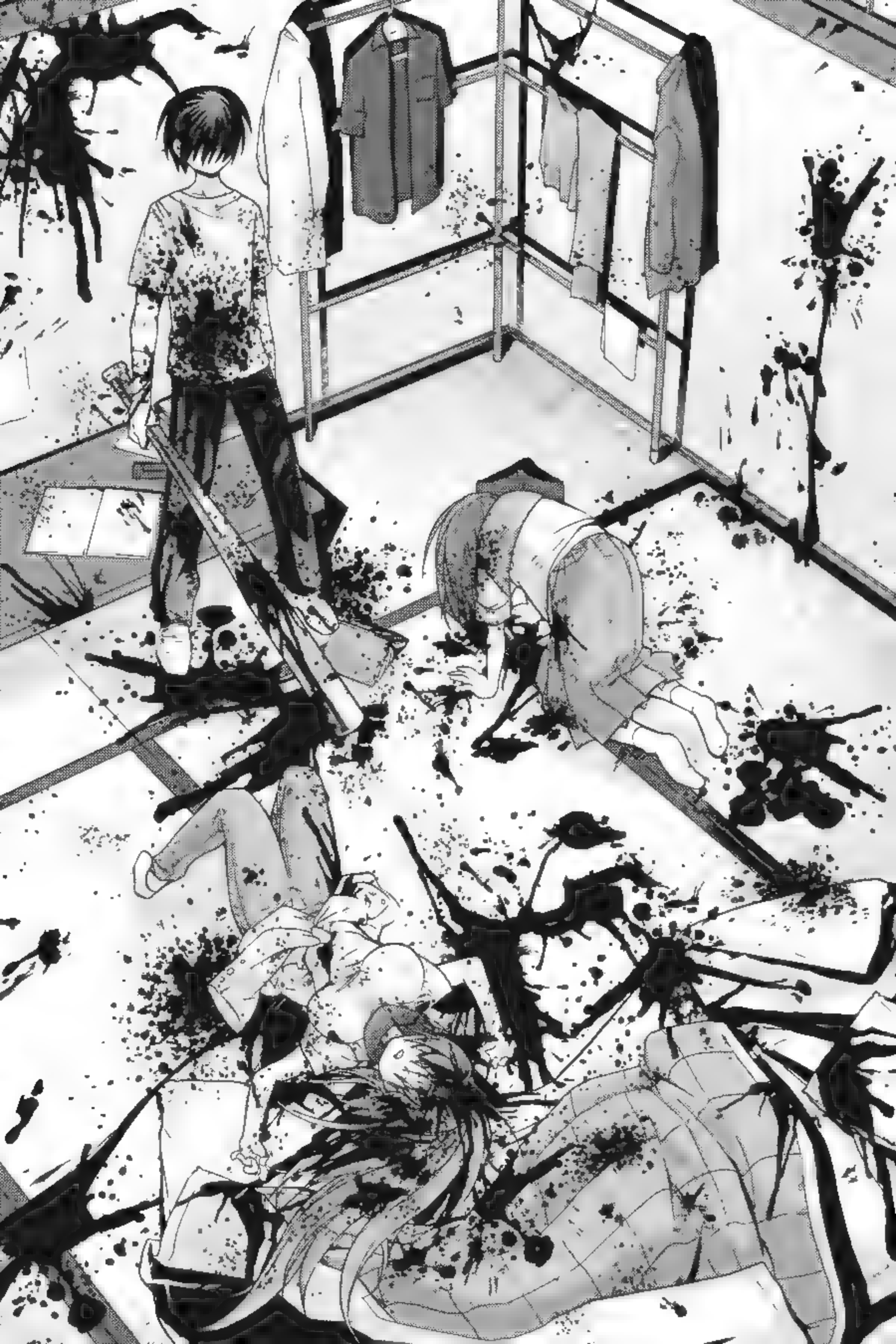
YOU'RE A GROWN MAN. WHAT'RE YOU CRYING FOR?

TSUN (POKE)

OH, COME ON, KEI-CHAN.

NOW...

...HURRY UP AND FEEL BETTER!
☆



WH...

WHAT WAS THAT...?

DID I...

...KILL MION SOME-WHERE ...?

WITH MY OWN HANDS ...

I DID IT.

I REMEMBER WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO HIT HER.

...NO, IT WAS TOO REAL FOR THAT.

A DREAM?

WHAT WAS THAT MEMORY ?

BACK THEN, I...

...THAT'S RIGHT. IT WASN'T JUST THAT.

WHY WOULD I DO THAT...?

WHY?

BUT THE TRUTH IS, THERE WAS A BRUTAL MURDER, WASN'T THERE!?

YOU TOLD ME THERE WEREN'T ANY INCIDENTS AT THE DAM CONSTRUCTION SITE.

FRIENDS DON'T HIDE THINGS FROM EACH OTHER.

IS THAT WHY YOU LEFT ME OUT?

...'COS I DIDN'T WANT TO SCARE YOU, KEI-CHAN...

TH-THAT WAS ...

YOU LIAR.

YOU'RE NO FRIEND OF MINE.

...SO SHE HID THE VILLAGE'S PAST FROM ME SO I WOULDN'T GET SCARED.

I HAD JUST MOVED HERE, AND MION WAS ALWAYS WORRIED ABOUT ME...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS.

BUT I REMEMBER IT CLEARLY.

BUT I KEPT PRESSING HER...

...AND SHE HADN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG!!

I... WAS SCUM!

I DIDN'T HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MY FRIEND FELT.

MION WAS MION.

THE GIRL WHO WILL ALWAYS BE MY BEST FRIEND.

SO WHY...

...WHY DID I DOUBT HER...!!?

OH YEAH.

PIN-POOON (DING-DOOONG)

リーンゴーン

THAT TIME TOO...

KEI-CHAAAN! YOU ALIVE?

WHO IS IT ...?

BIKU (WINCE)

ビク

MION AND RENA WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO SEE ME WHEN I STAYED HOME FROM SCHOOL.

AND THEY BROUGHT ME SOME HOME-MADE OHAGI.

SO WHY...

...WAS I SO AFRAID OF MION?

JUST BECAUSE SHE KNEW I HAD EATEN WITH OOISHI-SAN!?

THEY JUST WANTED TO HELP ME FEEL BETTER, THAT'S ALL.

BYE, KEI-CHAN.

KEIICHI-KUN, YOU DON'T LOOK VERY WELL.

YOU'RE RIGHT. LET'S GO HOME.

THAT'S WHY HER NEXT LINE...

...WENT LIKE THIS...

GACHA (KACHAK)

ガチャ

WE DON'T WANT YOU...

...TO STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL TOMORROW.

...AND ANSWERED SOMETHING LIKE...

...I SHOULD HAVE APPRECI-ATED THEIR EFFORTS...

BUT I...

BUT ...

YORO (STAGGER)

"SEE YOU AT SCHOOL!"

..."TOMOR-ROW I'LL BE FINE! I'LL BE THERE!

...LOCKED THE DOOR...

GACHA (CLICK)

...LIKE I WAS REJECTING THEM.

BUT I WAS COMPLETELY AFRAID OF THEM.

THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO HELP ME FEEL BETTER.

...THEY PUT THEIR HEARTS INTO MAKING THEM...

AND THE OHAGI THEY BROUGHT AS A GET-WELL GIFT...

PAPER: HINAMIZAWA

...KICK IN THE OHAGI.

I FELT SOME KIND OF...

モグ..

MOGU (MUNCH)

BUT I WAS SO SUSPICIOUS, I WAS SEEING THINGS THAT WEREN'T THERE...

...AND I ASSOCIATED THAT KICK WITH SOMETHING OMINOUS...

THEY LOVE PLAYING PRACTICAL JOKES.

THEY COULD HAVE MIXED IN SOME TABASCO OR SOMETHING.

I REMEMBERED A MANGA OR SOMETHING I HAD SEEN A LONG TIME AGO ...

...WITH A HORRIFYING SCENE WHERE SEWING NEEDLES WERE MIXED IN SOMEONE'S FOOD.

BEEF BLEACH

AS SOON AS I THOUGHT HOW BAD IT WOULD BE IF THERE WERE SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THE OHAGI...

...FOR SOME REASON ...

...I REALLY ...

...THERE WAS A NEEDLE ...!!

...THOUGHT THAT...

...I ASSUMED THAT THERE WAS A SEWING NEEDLE WHEN THERE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN...

...I SHOULD'VE ASSUMED IT WAS SOME KIND OF MISTAKE...

...AND TRUSTED MY FRIENDS' INNO-CENCE!!

EVEN IF THERE HAD BEEN A NEEDLE...

GIG CLENCH

AM I STUPID...? A FRIEND WOULDN'T PUT A NEEDLE IN FOOD.

KANA (CHIRP)
KANA
KANA

AND ON THAT LAST DAY...

YOU'RE ALIVE.

OH GOOD.

...ANX-IOUS ABOUT MY HEALTH ...

...RENA AND MION CAME TO VISIT...

AND MION JOKED AROUND LIKE ALWAYS TO HELP ME FEEL BETTER.

RENA WAS SINCERELY WORRIED.

AND ...

THEY CONTACTED THE DOCTOR AT IRIE CLINIC SO HE COULD COME CHECK ME OUT.

YES. HE SAID HE'D BE HERE RIGHT AWAY.

DID YOU CALL THE DIRECTOR?

...I GUESS WE'LL GET THIS OUT OF THE WAY BEFORE THE DIREC-TOR GETS HERE.

GOSO (RUMMAGE)

ALL RIGHT ...

IT'S YOUR PENALTY GAME.

PENALTY GAME!

WE'LL HAVE YOU MEET THE SAME FATE AS TOMITAKE-SAN!

...AND THOUGHT SHE WAS GOING TO KILL ME.

I SAW THE SYRINGE IN MION'S HAND...

...WITH A DRUG, JUST LIKE TOMITAKE-SAN...

...I WAS CONVINCED THAT I'D BE MUR-DERED...

KYUPON (KA-POP)

IT WAS ...

REMEMBER! WHAT WAS MION HOLDING ...?

...A SYRINGE THAT MION WAS HOLD-ING?

...BUT WAS IT REALLY ...

A MARK-ER...

.....

SHIRT: PLEASE LET US SEE YOUR PHOTOS NEXT TIME, OKAY? —RENA / YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE YOUR MAJOR DEBUT THIS YEAR! —MION / COME PLAY WITH US AGAIN. —KEIICHI

I ASSUMED THAT THE MARKER WAS A SYRINGE.

AND YET I WAS AFRAID OF MION.

SHE WAS GIVING ME THE SAME PENALTY GAME TO CHEER ME UP.

WE WROTE ON TOMITAKE-SAN'S SHIRT.

I HEARD ...

...AND MION CAME CLOSER.

THEN... RENA HELD ME DOWN ...

...GOING TO WRITE ON MY SHIRT?

WHAT WAS MION ...

*****
** ***
****
******

***

I HEARD IT.

...I CAN HEAR IT.

...WHAT MION WAS GOING TO WRITE...!!

HURRY UP AND FEEL BETTER!

☆

...I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT MION WASN'T DOING ANYTHING MALICIOUS ...!!

I HEARD IT, BUT I... IF I HEARD IT...

I WAS SO SUSPICIOUS I WAS SEEING THINGS. I WAS AFRAID OF EVERY-/THING ABOUT THE VILLAGE.

I WAS THE ONE WHO WAS ACTING DIFFER-ENT.

THEY WERE MY GREATEST FRIENDS.

MION AND RENA WEREN'T ANY DIF-FERENT FROM USUAL.

AND I...

GA GRAB

ガッ

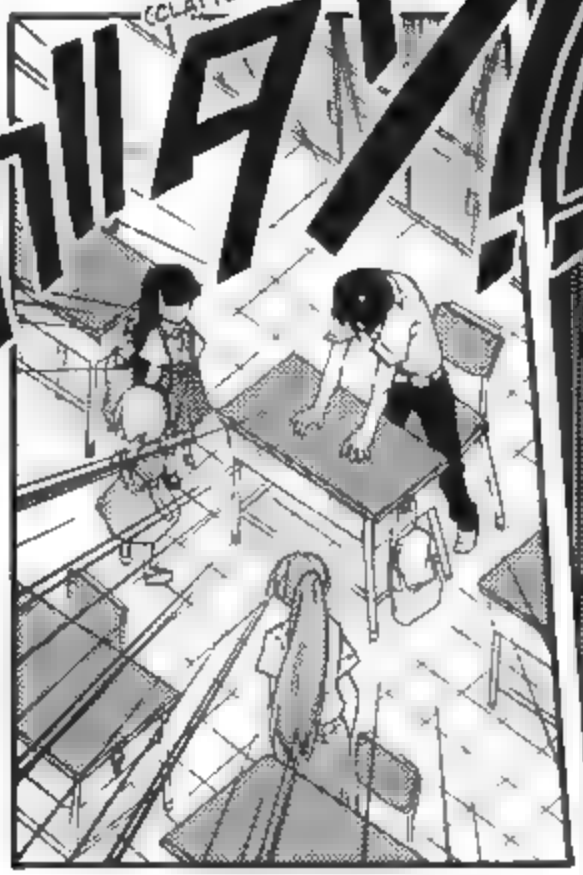
AND ...

...WITH MY OWN HANDS.

I KILLED MY FRIENDS...

GATAN (CLATTER)

THAT!!



YOU STUPID JERK !!!

MION ...

...MY GREAT-EST FRIEND!

I BEAT HER TO DEATH ...!!

BORO (POUR)

BORO

BORO

K...KEI-CHAN...?

LIKE I'D LET YOU BEAT ME TO DEATH, KEI-CHAN!!

NO! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT ...!

あああ AAAAH!

K... KEI-CHAN, CALM DOWN.

I'M ALIVE, SEE?

オロ ORO

オロ ORO (FLUSTER)

...BUT I HAD NO WAY TO EXPLAIN IT.

THEY ALL HAD CONFUSED LOOKS ON THEIR FACES....

YOU RE-MEMBER, KEIICHI, SIR...?

...KEI-ICHI.

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THESE MEMORIES WERE EITHER...

AAAHI

あああ

...RIKA-CHAN...

YOU REMEM-BER...

...THAT YOU KILLED RENA AND MII?

I KILLED THEM!!

NNNGH!

YES. I REMEM-BER IT CLEARLY.

...I WENT TO THE PHONE BOOTH.

AND IN THE END, WITH NO REGRETS ...

GAR

GARI SCRATCH

I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY VICTIM.

I DOUBTED MY FRIENDS.

MY THROAT ITCHED SO BAD I COULDN'T STAND IT... I SCRATCHED IT OUT...

...AND SELFISHLY DIED, ALL ON MY OWN...

BUT THE MION I KILLED IN THE OTHER WORLD...

...I CAN'T APOLOGIZE! I CAN'T ATONE!

THE MION IN THIS WORLD IS DEFINITELY ALIVE.

IS SOME-THING WRONG?

NO, NO

KEI-ICHI ...

...HAVE YOU REALIZED YOUR CRIMES?

...YEAH... AFTER ALL THIS TIME ...

...I FINALLY REMEMBER.

...BUT SHE ACTED IN A WAY THAT DIDN'T MAKE ME FEEL THE DIFFERENCE AT ALL.

SHE WAS ONE YEAR OLDER THAN ME...

...WAS THE VERY FIRST PERSON TO TALK TO ME.

WHEN I TRANSFERRED HERE, MION...

I LOVED HER AS MY BEST FRIEND...

...AND MY DEAREST COMPANION.

SO WHY COULDN'T I TRUST HER...?

THAT'S WHO MION IS TO ME.

I WON'T EVER GET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE IT UP TO THAT MION.

I CAN'T UNDO THE CRIMES I'VE COMMITTED.

FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE...

...MY CRIME WILL NEVER BE FOR-GIVEN.

...KEIICHI.

MIIIN (BUZZZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN..

I FORGIVE YOU, KEIICHI.

...SO NO ONE WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT AN AMAZING THING YOU DID.

...IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW THE CRIMES YOU COMMITTED IN A DIFFERENT WORLD...

YOU REALIZED YOUR CRIMES ALL ON YOUR OWN, KEIICHI, SIR.

EH ...?

...I UNDER-STAND THAT THIS IS A MIRACLE.

SU (SSK)

SO I CAN FORGIVE YOU, KEIICHI.

BUT I UNDERSTAND, SIR.

BECAUSE REALIZING THE CRIMES YOU COMMITTED IN A DIFFERENT WORLD...

...IS ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE.

...UNDER-STOOD THESE IMPOS-SIBLE MEMORIES ...

BUT I GOT THE FEELING THAT SHE, AT LEAST...

I HAD NO IDEA WHAT RIKA-CHAN WAS TALKING ABOUT.

RIKA-CHAN...

AS YOU ARE NOW, YOU WILL UNDER-STAND.

...KEI-ICHI.

...THE CURRENT RENA RYUGU IS IN.

YOU UNDER-STAND WHAT STATE OF MIND ...

HA (GASP)

はっ...

I ASSUMED EVERYTHING AROUND ME WAS MY ENEMY, AND I WENT CRAZY.

. BACK THEN, THE SLIGHTEST THING MADE ME SUSPECT ANYONE.

IT'S THE SAME WITH RENA RIGHT NOW.

...BUT SHE JUST CAN'T BRING HERSELF TO DO IT.

SHE WANTS TO TRUST HER FRIENDS SO MUCH SHE CAN'T STAND IT ...

...BUT SHE BELIEVES IT'S THE WORLD THAT'S GONE MAD.

SHE'S THE ONLY ONE GOING CRAZY...

I COULDN'T FIGURE IT OUT...

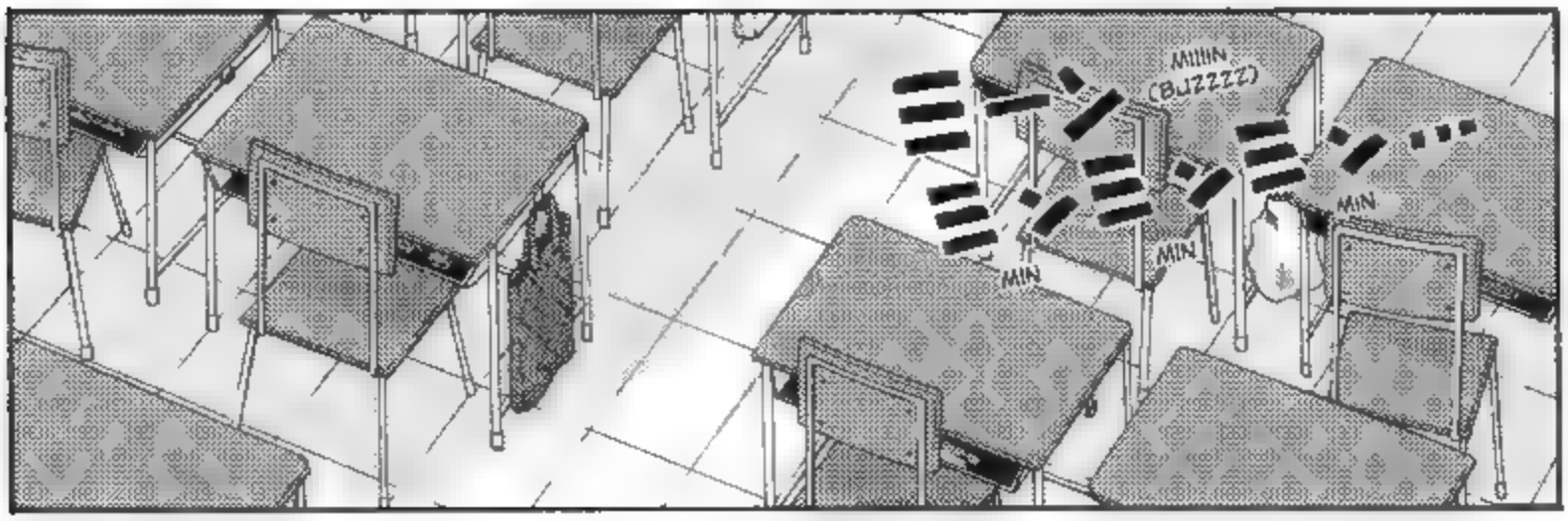
WHAT DO WE DO...?

POTA

POTA (DRIP)

I'VE BEEN THROUGH IT MYSELF, SO I KNOW.

NO ONE'S VOICE WILL REACH RENA...



KEIICHI-KUN.

TRUST ME.

I'VE HEARD THESE WORDS SOMEWHERE BEFORE.

THAT'S RENA'S VOICE.

ガタ... GATA (CLATTER)

REMEM-
BER!

REMEM-
BER!

BACK
WHEN I
LOST MY
SENSES!

REMEM-
BER WHAT
HAPPENED
THEN!

MY
ROOM
IN THAT
WORLD.

MY
HOUSE.

...AND RENA ...

I HAD ALREADY KILLED MION...

RENA...

...WAS THERE, ALL BEAT UP.

SHE WAS BLEED-ING.

I'D BEATEN HER BADLY WITH THE BAT.

I HAD LOST IT.

AND HER FOREHEAD WAS SPLIT OPEN.

HER ARM WAS BRO-KEN.

BUT EVEN SO...

...EVEN SO, RENA...

...SMILED AT ME.

...SO SHE SMILED AT ME SO THAT SHE WOULDN'T SCARE ME.

RENA KNEW I WAS AFRAID...

...AND HER OWN LIFE WAS IN DANGER.

MION WAS ALREADY DEAD...

...AND I SHOWERED HER WITH BLOWS FROM MY BAT.

EVEN THEN, I COULDN'T TRUST RENA...

AND YET RENA...

...AS I WAS SWINGING THE BAT TO DELIVER THE FINAL BLOW...

...IN THE VERY LAST MOMENT...

IT'S OKAY, KEIICHI-KUN.

TRUST ME.

UP UNTIL THE LAST SECOND BEFORE SHE LOST HER LIFE...

...SHE KEPT SMILING, AND SHE SAID...

IN THE LAST MOMENT ...

...RENA DIDN'T COVER HER HEAD.

"TRUST ME."

WHY !!?

MY FRIEND WAS TELLING ME TO TRUST HER, SO WHY...!!?

RRAAGH!!

BAN (BAM)

SO WHY COULDN'T I BELIEVE IN HER !!!?

RENA WAS MY FRIEND UP UNTIL HER DEATH!!

...
KEIICHI
...

...IN THE SAME WAY.

...I HAVE TO DESTROY MY CRIMES ...

BUT ...

...THE WEIGHT FEELS A LITTLE LIGHTER BECAUSE YOU'VE FORGIVEN ME, RIKA-CHAN...

IS MY LIFE WORTH HANGING ONTO?

GIGIG (CRREEEAK)

...

RENA DIED FOR HER FRIEND.

I'LL SAVE HER !!

I'LL SNAP RENA OUT OF THIS!

KI (GLARE)

ALL THAT LIES AHEAD IS TRAGEDY.

...THIS WORLD HAS ALREADY GONE MAD.

...WILL YOU FIGHT, SIR...?

...EVEN SO...

...KEI-ICHI...

ぎゅっ

GYU (CLENCH)

GIVING UP MEANS I DON'T BELIEVE.

...I'M NOT GIVING UP.

SO THERE'S STILL TIME.

I BELIEVE IN OUR BOND AS FRIENDS.

I BELIEVE IN RENA.

I WON'T LET THERE BE A TRAGEDY!

NO MATTER WHAT !!

(CLENCH)

JUST YESTERDAY, I STOPPED CARING WHAT HAPPENED TO RENA.

...I'M EXHAUSTED FROM MY COUNTLESS FAILURES.

...THAT WAS WRONG.

BUT ...

KEIICHI MAE-BARA.

I WILL FIGHT ALONGSIDE YOU.

...TO REACH THE FUTURE BEYOND ...!

AS MANY TIMES AS IT TAKES ...

I WILL FIGHT AS MANY TIMES AS IT TAKES.

SO I WILL FIGHT ALONG-SIDE YOU.

... SUB-LIME.

I'VE LEARNED THAT THE WILL TO FIGHT IS BEAUTI-FUL...

...THAT COULD TWIST DES-TINY.

IT CAN SPARK MIRA-CLES ...

...PLEASE REMEMBER SOMEDAY, OKAY?

KOT SUN (KONK)

BUT SATOKO ...

IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER, SIR.

WH.. WHAT WERE YOU AND KEIICHI-SAN TALKING ABOUT, R.KA?

...KEIICHI FOUGHT BODY AND SOUL TO SAVE YOU.

REMEMBER THAT WHEN YOU WERE TRAPPED AND COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT...

HEE-HEE... RIGHT, KEIICHI?

I DON'T THINK I CAN BELIEVE THAT...

...KEI-ICHI-SAN DID?

THERE MIGHT BE A WORLD...

...WHERE I RISKED MY OWN LIFE FIGHTING FOR SATOKO TOO...

NII- NII!

...SATOKO IS ONE OF MY DEAR FRIENDS TOO.

...YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT...

NI (GRIND)

I'M SORRY FOR THE COMMO-TION.

NO.

MAEBARA-KUN, IS SOMETHING THE MATTER ...?

WHAT THE HECK IS WRONG ...?

WH-WHAT IS IT, KEI-CHAN?

HWA?

MION.

SU (SSK)

ZA (LOOM)

GYU (HUG)

AH ...!

I'M SORRY.

I'M REALLY SORRY...!

F-F-F-FOR WHAT!?

THIS OLD MAN HAS NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT ...

BUT LISTEN TO ME.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, IT'S OKAY.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO UNDER-STAND.

THE OHAGI WERE REALLY DELICIOUS.

I'LL SEE YOU AT SCHOOL TOMORROW ...!

BUT I'LL NEVER MIS-TRUST YOU—

NO, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO IT IS.

I'M REALLY SORRY IT TOOK ME THIS LONG TO THANK YOU.

GYU (HUG)

...TO SAY IT BACK THEN...

I JUST COULDN'T BRING MYSELF...

I'LL NEVER MISTRUST MY FRIENDS AGAIN.

NO MATTER WHAT ...!!

SOMEDAY, IF ANY MISFOR-TUNE BEFALLS YOU, MION...

...I'LL SAVE YOU, EVEN IF IT COSTS ME MY LIFE.

NO MATTER WHAT. I PROMISE ...!!

.....

...BUT RIKA-CHAN AND I UNDER-STAND.

THEY MAY NOT KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON...

NIPAAA (BEEEAMO)

にぱー

AH-HA-HA-HA... YOU'RE MAKING ME BLUSH ...

...K-KEI-CHAN...

WE WON'T ACCEPT ANY TRAGEDY.

WE'LL FIGHT DESTINY TO THE LAST.

...IN THAT HINA-MIZAWA...

BACK THEN...

...AND RENA FOUGHT...

...MION FOUGHT...

SO I WILL SAVE RENA.

I'LL DO WHAT SHE DID FOR ME.

I...

...WILL STAKE MY LIFE ON IT.

KANA

KANA CHIRP

I WILL SAVE THEM.

I HAVE TO SAVE HINA-MIZAWA.

KANA KANA KANA

I WILL DO ANYTHING ...

...TO SAVE THIS VILLAGE.

GARI (SCRATCH)

I HAVE TO SAVE THEM.

POTA POTA

I HAVE TO SAVE THEM.

EVEN

...IF IT RESULTS IN A TRAGEDY ...!!

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ABOUT THE "ATONEMENT ARC" PRECISELY BECAUSE HE IS A "NORMAL PERSON"

ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR: RYUKISHI07

HELLO, I'M RYUKISHI07.

FOR THIS AFTERWORD, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THE MAIN CHARACTER OF *HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY*, KEIICHI MAEBARA.

IT'S TRUE THAT KEIICHI MAEBARA HAS SEVERAL UNIQUE TRAITS. BUT FUNDAMENTALLY, HE'S A NORMAL PERSON, JUST LIKE YOU AND ME. HE HAS AN ENERGY BEFITTING HIS AGE, AND HE CAN'T SIT BACK AND WATCH WHEN SOMETHING'S BOTHERING HIS FRIENDS. THOSE ARE ALL TRAITS THAT WOULD BE NATURAL AND NOT A BIT STRANGE FOR ANY OF US TO HAVE.

AND IF THIS KEIICHI CAN CONFRONT THE HARDSHIPS THAT BEFALL HIM AND OVERCOME THEM, THEN THAT MEANS WE CAN ALL OVERCOME, JUST LIKE HIM. IT THRILLS ME TO THINK OF IT.

OF COURSE, *HIGURASHI* IS ENTERTAINMENT. NOTHING COULD BE BETTER THAN FOR YOU TO LAUGH AND CRY AS YOU READ IT.

BUT IF THERE'S ANYONE WHO LEARNS FROM KEIICHI MAEBARA AND PUTS WHAT THEY LEARN INTO PRACTICE, THEN AS THE AUTHOR, I'M CERTAIN THAT NOTHING COULD MAKE ME HAPPIER.

OH, BUT PLEASE IMITATE KEIICHI'S GOOD QUALITIES, OKAY? DON'T COPY THE BAD ONES!

-SPECIAL THANKS-

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NIWAKO-SAMA,
BANCHO-SAMA,
TOMOKA FURUDA-SAMA,
MISSHII-SAMA,
MOYOMOSO-SAMA,
RICO-SAMA,
YF-SAMA,
YOSHUN-SAMA

AND YOU!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR STICKING WITH ME THIS FAR. THE "ATONEMENT ARC" HAS PASSED ITS TURNING POINT. ALL THAT'S LEFT IS A STRAIGHT DASH TO THE FINISH. IT'LL BE A CLIMAX FROM BEGINNING TO END! I HOPE THAT YOU'LL JOIN ME AGAIN.

THIS VOLUME IS A BIG ONE WITH A LOT OF PAGES. I'VE ALWAYS SECRETLY DREAMED OF PUTTING OUT A REALLY THICK GRAPHIC NOVEL, SO I AM EXTREMELY GLAD AND HUMBLED. VOLUME FOUR, THE NEXT VOLUME, WILL BE THE LAST ONE. I WILL DO MY BEST TO MAKE IT EVEN MORE INTENSE THAN THIS ONE.

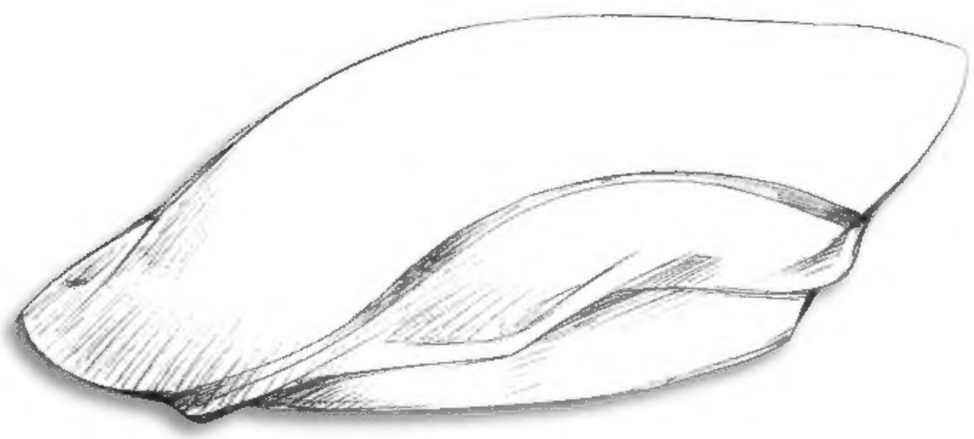
KARIN SUZURAGI

...IF...

...WE MEET AGAIN.

...NEXT TIME, LET'S PLAY LIKE NORMAL, LAUGH TOGETHER LIKE NORMAL... AND FALL IN LOVE LIKE NORMAL.

HEY, KEIICHI-KUN...



HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY:
ATONEMENT ARC 4 (CONCLUSION)

HIGURASHI
WHEN THEY CRY
ATONEMENT ARC ③

RYUKISHI07
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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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